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New Statesman

SWEETHEART DEALS

Whatever happened to union militancy?

SHORT STORIES by Aileen La Tourette & Adrianne Blue

VERONICA GROOCOCK: Women on Aids

IAN WILLIAMS: Drink 'n drugs 'n Merseyside

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New Statesman

Cover drawing: David Hine

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New Statesman

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Railways next in line for sacrifice

THE RAILWAY dispute that has now entered a new phase was originally scheduled by BR management for last year. It remains to be seen what level of unofficial action is maintained following Wednesday's vote against an official strike.

The showdown with the NUR over guards was postponed until 1985 only because the government made it quite clear that it did not want a simultaneous two-front war with major nationalised industry unions — and 1984 was to be devoted, however long it took, however much it cost, to the defeat of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Once the NUM dispute was out of the way, Bob Reid, chairman of BR, and his team got on with it rapidly enough. Mr Reid has shown himself as eager as Mr MacGregor ever was at the Coal Board to show that he is a hard-nosed, market-oriented performer, who knows how to 'stand up to the unions'.

The context, though, of the two disputes is completely different. The coal industry is indeed in the grip of a technological revolution which threatens job losses far beyond those which triggered off the 1984 dispute. Yet for the government in general and for Mrs Thatcher in particular the economics behind the dispute were quite secondary.

The NUM led by Arthur Scargill was seen as a *political* threat to the government and the Tory party and the resistance was correspondingly political. Indeed, the dispute between Mr MacGregor and the government that has been rumbling below the surface in the months since the strike ended confirms this interpretation. For Mrs Thatcher and Mr Walker the battle is over and won, with persistently high unemployment now the sore political point; but the Coal Board chairman wants to go on cutting capacity and employment in order to get closer to arbitrarily fixed financial targets.

AT BRITISH RAIL, by contrast, the sums of money involved at the basis of the present dispute are very small indeed. According to the highest claims made by British Rail, the abolition of NUR guards and the introduction of the planned number of ASLEF Driver Only Operated (DOO) trains would save £27 million after five years. This figure is arrived at by multiplying the 'full employment' cost of one guard (£15,000) by the number of guards' jobs (1,760) that would be made redundant.

Even this figure is fallaciously high in real terms. For a start, it ignores the substantial extra payments that still have to be negotiated with drivers and signalmen for dealing with DOO trains. Not surprisingly, the unions involved here have chosen to delay negotiating these sums until BR is committed to the new trains, but the figures are bound to be substantial.

The £27 million also, of course, ignores other direct and indirect costs that will be involved in the change. It ignores the costs to the Exchequer of supporting someone in unemployment who might otherwise have had a job. It ignores the indirect costs of increased delays caused by the absence of guards. (A London Transport delegation, for example, to Hamburg in 1983 found that DOO trains in that city increased delays and caused

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significant, if not easily quantifiable, waste and costs as a result of delays.)

In short, if all of these factors were taken seriously into account, the £27 million would be reduced so far as real benefits to the national economy was concerned to a sum that would be completely insignificant against a BR annual turnover of £3.5 *billion*. And, whatever BR say to the contrary, the savings cannot justify the drop in safety standards and convenience to the public that are implied by DOO operations. Passengers rightly feel safer on trains with guards and guards regularly play critical safety roles on the track in case of accidents.

SERIOUS FINANCIAL savings are thus not at the heart of the dispute. For Mr Reid the game that is being played is political, though in a completely different sense to the NUM dispute. The NUR, unlike Arthur Scargill, has no ambition, declared or undeclared, to bring down the Thatcher government by industrial action.

Mr Reid however, has to deal with a Minister of Transport whose starting point is hostility to rail and ideological support for road transport and with a Prime Minister who makes a positive boast of her dislike of rail travel. Yet, as a lifelong and professional railway manager (the first that British Rail has ever had as chairman), he knows that BR will stand comparison (and financial comparison at that) with any major national railway system in the world. Its 'staff productivity' (train miles a year per employee) is equal to the celebrated Swiss railway system and is bettered in Europe only in the Netherlands. By most other measures of performance BR has been one of the success stories of world railways. At the same time direct government subsidy for its opeations — measured as a proportion of national product, or by passenger or freight miles operated — is already the lowest in Europe. This country is unique in failing to appreciate the future importance of a modern rail system to the infrastructure of the economy.

Mr Reid has presumably concluded that, so long as he has to live under a Thatcher-Ridley regime, he must play a Thatcher-Ridley game. No rational national transport policy would require the freight business of the railway system to break even in narrow financial terms by 1988-89 (ignoring entirely the huge wider cost-benefit and environmental advantages of rail), while continuing to pump huge indirect subsidy into road transport (and continuing to ignore its cost-benefit and environmental disadvantages). Yet that is the immovable Ridley directive to BR and Mr Reid seems to have decided that there is little point in tackling it head on.

Instead he has chosen to have a planned confrontation with the NUR over 1,760 jobs in order to satisfy his political masters' desire for blood in the hope that behind this sacrifice he will be able to get the longer term investment in the rail system that it obviously needs. It is a measure of the level to which Thatcherism has reduced the conduct of the public sector that its managements have to play such cynical games with other people's lives, employment and safety in order to protect the future of their industries.

It has placed the unions in a difficult position. Relations between the NUR and the drivers' union are delicate. On the face of it ASLEF stands to gain by DOO trains. The front of mutual ASLEF-NUR support was fragile and the NUR leadership knew it. So in their hearts did the membership and in this dispute ASLEF support for sustained official NUR action would have been the key. Without it a dispute, however justified, would in the end have been futile.

No doubt the government will be dancing another victory jig. The overriding requirement now is to limit the damage that can be done to BR by this anti-rail government in the knowledge that the Ridley 1988-9 financial targets lie the other side of the next general election—which on any present indication must result in a government that would follow a more responsible national transport policy. □

BRITISH RAIL SERVICES IN LONDON-

DO THEY MEET YOUR NEEDS?

It is widely recognised that British Rail's services play a vital role in keeping the Capital moving.

It is also widely felt that they could be improved and expanded.

To investigate BR's services in London and how they meet the needs of Londoners the GLC has set up an independent investigation to be chaired by Margaret Roberts of the Polytechnic of Central London.

If you use BR to get around or, just as importantly, find it fails to meet your needs we would like to hear from you.

Some areas of discussion could include fare levels, frequency and reliability, and integration with bus and underground services.

If you would like to make your views known, either as an individual or as a group, you can write to:
BRITISH RAIL SERVICE INVESTIGATION
FREEPOST
LONDON SE1 7YZ (no stamp is required)

Submissions are particularly welcome from women, the ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

The closing date for submissions is Monday 30 September.

GLC
Working for London

WHAT PRICE SUNDAY SHOPPING?

We know that unlimited Sunday trading will mean many shopworkers losing their jobs, because retailers will replace full-time staff with Sunday-only casual labour. Food shops, for instance, will sell less food during the week as some customers switch to Sunday bulk shopping.

Many small shops will close down once their big competitors open legally on Sunday. So workers in small shops will be made redundant.

Shop managers, supervisors etc., will be forced to work regular Sundays, as well as Saturdays, in order to supervise the casual staff. This will ruin the family and social life of permanent shopworkers, mostly married women.

Wages will fall as part- timers' hours are cut and other wagebill economies are made.

Prices, on the other hand, will rise as sales will not increase sufficiently to cover the costs of a shopkeeper opening for seven days a week rather than six.

Help USDAW in the fight against unlimited Sunday trading.
The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ

USDAW

COME TO USDAW'S TUC MEETING – TUESDAY, 12.40, OPERA HOUSE FOYER.

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Hung councils update

IT'S STILL A TILT TO THE RIGHT BY LIB/SDP

SINCE OUR round-up of hung councils after the May county elections (*NS* 31 May 1985) further examples of Labour-Liberal co-operation have emerged, although overall the Liberal/SDP Alliance still tend to support Conservatives (*see table*). JOHN RENTOUL reports

IN LANCASHIRE, the Labour Party overcame its pique at the Liberals' vote for the re-election of the Tory council chair, and formed an administration with Liberal support.

In Gloucestershire, 14 Labour councillors supported 23 Alliance councillors taking over from the Tories, while on Gloucester city council, which has been hung since 1983, the six Liberals switched from the Tories to Labour.

Hung Councils

Party forming administration	
CON supported by LIB/SDP	16
LAB supported by LIB/SDP	6
CON supported by LAB	5
LAB supported by CON	6
LIB/SDP supported by LAB	8
LIB/SDP supported by CON	1
OTHER	10
Total	52

But the Labour Party has been involved in much agonising (opponents might call it internal division) over its national policy of 'no coalitions'. The problem is committee chairs: holding these usually means controlling the council. On the traditional hung council, a behind-the-scenes deal gives one party the chairs in return for concessions to another party, or shares the chairs between them.

Labour's policy of 'no coalitions' means that Labour councillors have often condemned themselves to powerless backbenches. In Clwyd, older Labour councillors are baffled by the enthusiasm of their younger colleagues to allow hard line Tories to take committee chairs and use their casting vote on controversial decisions. Clwyd is hung four ways between Labour, Independents, Tories and Liberals.

But the 'Other' classification (*see table*) includes two examples of a new development — the multi-party council where committee chairs have been bypassed in favour of 'representative panels'.

Chair games in Beds

At this year's annual meeting of Bedfordshire, the Alliance group (13 Libs, 1 SDP) made what both Tories (30) and Labour (29) regarded as excessive demands, so the Tories agreed to a radical Labour proposal to abolish all committee chairs.

It was agreed that the symbolic role of council chair be alternated between Tories and Labour, while day to day power would reside in 'representative panels' of three party spokespeople for each council committee. On these panels the Tory and Labour representatives have the power of veto, and can refer disputes to a special committee meeting. Committee membership is allocated on a 2:2:1 basis.

Paths trod by Oxon

On Oxfordshire county council, which became hung this May, the position is more even: Tories 31, Labour 20, Alliance 18 (with one Independent). Labour leader Rev Tony Williamson has trod a difficult but pragmatic path.

He succeeded in adding £3.6 million to the council's £230 million budget (compared with a Labour commitment to increase spending by £4 million). But he has avoided any form of 'traditional' power-sharing with the Alliance, which he fears would mean a cosy carve-up of committee chairs and the exclusion of Labour from real participation in some areas of council business.

He cannot oust Tory committee chairs without Alliance support, so he has got round them. Committee chairs have lost most of their formal powers to 'urgency subcommittees' of each committee, which meet before the main committee and order its business. These 'urgency subs' consist of one spokesperson from each of the three groups, although the committees themselves are made up on a 3:2:2 basis.

'Democratic Libs'

It may be that this sort of structure allows Labour to participate in hung councils in the most democratic way, without either abdicating responsibility to Tories or the Alliance, or making concessions and sharing the blame for the failure of another party's policies.

The Liberals have also made several gains for democracy and open government. Liberal 'balanced council' specialist Margaret Clay says: 'On all the councils where the Alliance holds the balance, except Cumbria, proportionality on committees has been achieved. And on most of these councils progress has been made towards implementing some form of the "Cheshire conventions", which will ensure the proper flow of information to all parties on the council.' ●

FUNDS SOUGHT FOR RARE LABOUR BOOK LIBRARY

FUNDS are being solicited to preserve a remarkable, privately created, Manchester book-collection known since 1969 — when a charitable educational trust was set up to administer it — as the Working Class Movement Library. It's housed in a small suburban home.

Some 30 years ago Ruth and Edmund Frow, who already between them had some 3,000 books mostly on trade union and labour-related subjects, met at Workers Educational Association (WEA) summer school, and shortly after married. She was a teacher, he a toolmaker.

In the early '50s, while acquiring as many new books as they could afford, they embarked on second-hand-book buying safaris. Initially in a clapped-out van, sleeping in a tent, they toured second-hand bookshops the length and the breadth of the British Isles, in search of solid volumes and ephemera relating to the British labour movement in its broadest aspects — very much including the women's contribution.

Their finds are in a small semi-detached, in an unaffluent suburb of Manchester, indistinguishable on the exterior from thousands of other such homes. Inside, 10,000 plus volumes line the walls from floor to ceiling in solid-wood, glass-fronted cases, and in the rooms in which it wasn't possible to install bookcases, walls are hung with early trade union, Radical, Marxist, ILP, or suffragette medals, banners and posters.

The Frows believe that one day there'll be a radical change in society — not of the Thatcher variety. And when that day comes, believe that people will want and need to know about the social, industrial and labour history that preceded the change. Modestly off-hand about their achievement, it delights them that people arrive from all over the world to consult material that isn't available in the British Library; and to savour their personal, infinitely knowledgeable service in a unique setting.

Now the collection's future concerns them. They want it to remain intact *in situ* with a live-in librarian offering, if not exactly the same service as they themselves have provided, at least a similar, friendly, informed one. The books and bookcases are bequeathed, and the house is willed, to the trust, but they are launching an appeal for donations or covenants, however small.

The specific aim is to meet the cost of a librarian if their own health fails and for after they are gone, and to ensure that a unique library isn't dispersed after their deaths but stays where, in their opinion, it rightly and appropriately belongs: in a small house in a suburb of the world's first industrial city, Manchester — in the country which spawned the Industrial Revolution which changed the face of the world.

ONE of those libraries which is famous to those who are specialists, but unknown to the general public — the Frows with just a few shelves-full out of their vast collection.

Joyce Marlow

If you wish to help, please contact the New Statesman *and we will forward your letter.*

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Paul Mattsson

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE — the City AA protests continue. Here (Friday 23 August) Haringey mayor Jim Gardiner, who is blind, accompanied by his lady mayoress Kathy Hollis, arrested in their chains of office. Case will be heard at Bow Street magistrates, 3 September

'Nonsense' says MoD, 'no risk' from extremely low frequencies

THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MoD) has claimed that a proposed new military communications system is completely harmless to humans and animals in spite of fierce controversy over its health effects in the United States.

In a recent letter to Labour MP George Foulkes, the MoD minister of state Adam Butler says that 'a great deal of research' into the possible health effects of Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) communications has been done in the USA. This has, Butler argues, confirmed the MoD's view that ELF radiation (electromagnetic, not nuclear) is safe.

But US research isn't so conclusive. A Congressional research service report last year pointed out that official reassurances are challenged by a number of scientists who believe that ELF radiation has 'subtle adverse health effects'. Even a report for the US Navy — after repeating the official line — mentioned that 'certain ambiguities' in existing research mean that there's a need to continue monitoring the situation.

Opposition group claims of links between long term exposure to ELF radiation and cancer caused a US district court to ban work on ELF systems at Wisconsin and Michigan last year, although this was overturned after six months by a higher court. The controversy is related to that which surrounds the possible health effects of living near high voltage electric power lines.

Scottish exposure

It was revealed earlier this year that the MoD is considering three unnamed potential sites in Scotland for the construction of a British ELF communications system. The initial plan is to erect a 12-mile test aerial, followed by a much larger system. The US test transmitter at Wisconsin is 28 miles long, and that planned for Michigan in 1987 is expected to be 56 miles in length.

The purpose of ELF communications is to improve radio contact with submarines submerged deep in the oceans where they are more likely to escape detection by an enemy. With its very long wavelength, ELF can penetrate hundreds of feet below sea level and, with sufficient power, cover the entire globe.

Rob Edwards

TUC Conference

WATCH OUT FOR THIS ONE

ONE OF the most important and closely-fought battles at next week's TUC conference in Blackpool will probably also — judging from previous experience — be one of the most overlooked. On Thursday morning delegates will decide whether or not to come out clearly against nuclear power. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is moving an energy policy motion which includes a strong condemnation of the government's nuclear expansion plans. The engineering workers' union AUEW and the Institute of Professional Civil Servants have both put in pro-nuclear wrecking amendments. In previous years the pro-nuclear lobby might have been expected to win the day, but this year there are two reasons why things might just be different — a sympathetic backlash in support of the NUM and, crucially, the radically anti-nuclear power policy adopted by the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union (against the advice of its executive) at its biennial delegates' conference earlier this year. ●

MISCELLANY

BBC news values . . .

Even our strongest feelings of support for BBC journalists in their yelping vaults between frying pan (the governors) and fire (the board of management) are beginning to wilt as we enquire into why they didn't show the Notting Hill Gate 20th Carnival live this Bank Holiday Monday (26 August). BBC 1 ran about three hours worth of old movies and *Grandstand;* BBC 2 ran *three* old movies and a *Bank Holiday Special* which — words almost fail us — concerned holiday camps in the 1950s, 'the secrets behind Bank Holiday weather forecasting', and . . . oh, forget it. Yet the 9.50pm BBC 1 news broadcast, with stray clips of the action at the Gate, called London's 'Caribbean tradition in motion' (*that* phrase is the black community's own, not the BBC's) 'the biggest street festival in Europe'.

. . . are in a timewarp

Over to the BBC press office for what must surely rank as the most preposterous excuse for having-done-nothing-about-something to have emerged from a TV station since . . . well, since the governors at the Beeb commanded no-showing of the Real Lives *documentary. 'It's very difficult', the press office stiffly informed* Miscellany *this Tuesday, 'to make a programme about a live event — we have to edit it, and it loses its impact'. This of course is the reason why the Royal Wedding wasn't shown on TV in 1981, nor the Live Aid concert carried by any television network anywhere this summer★, nor indeed the Coronation shown in 1953. It's also the reason why* Grandstand, *the sports programme advertised for BBC1 this Monday, had to be cancelled; for several of the races took place this very Monday, not in the 1950s.*

★Talking of Live Aid, the book of the uproar (*Live Aid, The Greatest Show on Earth*, Sidgwick & Jackson, £7.95, all profits to Live Aid) is now out. Text Peter Hillmore, intro Bob Geldof, pix, pix, pix. . . heres the present everyone's *got* to give.

But then. . .

300,000 persons, and that's a conservative estimate (it has to be because it's the *Daily Telegraph's* Tuesday morning) or 'up to 1,000,000' (liberal estimate, the *Guardian*) poured into the Gate on Monday for astounding floats and costumes, steel bands coming out of your ears, and an atmosphere that was 'marvellous' (quote from an officer in charge of policing). Neil and Glenys Kinnock were there and so was Arthur Scargill, but they'd be the second to say, and we'll be the first, that it isn't because *they* turned up that the Carnival should have been televised. It's because it was a spectacle which would get an hour of Beeb time any old day if it happened in Rio, or New Orleans, or Nice, showing funny foreigners. Ah! Oh! Obviously that's it: the blacks are funny foreigners, only they aren't at a safe distance. They're living in London.

. . . so are everyone's

Latent racism? In BBC programmers? The idea . . . why as recently as 1976 (press office again) they made 'a whole programme' about the Notting Hill Gate Carnival; and in 1981 Newsnight *did an entire 15-minute report on preparations. Why, and this year the Beeb devoted a whole hour to live coverage of the London lesbian and gay Carnival of 29 June, with its 10,000 celebrants and appearances by Divine, Livingstone, Jimi Somerville etc, and they can't cover everything. What? Oh, well actually, sorry, they* didn't *do live coverage of the lesbian and gay Carnival. Footage from a Washington gay pride march of several years ago, however, would be acceptable on British TV, and recently was... But why are we telling you only about the Beeb? There was no live coverage of this Monday's Notting Hill Gate Carnival on Thames either ('It went off so smoothly . . .' i.e. not news) or Channel 4 ('ask ITN about that'). ITN gave 1 min 9 secs.*

. . . except the cops'

'Television coverage remains inadequate', wrote Carnival chair Alex Pascall temperately before

Monday's event. Why isn't it televised live, we asked Carnival administrator Pepe Frances on Tuesday — are you asking vast fees? 'We'd like to know too', he said, 'and, no, there's no question of our trying to charge filming fees'. The best, but private, live coverage in fact was almost certainly the police's: they had cameras everywhere. Things the cameras (journalists', that's to say) might have seen: police in uniform doing a strip — yes, it happened. Betteshanger miners selling *Coal not Dole* teatowels, shoved off-route into a private garden by unfriendlier cops; Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaigners leafletting. But above all, a black event, black organised, celebrating FUN. Of course if fun were shown on screen, that's a habit that might be catching.

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LAW CHANGE AIMS TO TURN ESTATE SALES FROM 'TRICKLE TO FLOOD'

WITH THE COUNCIL HOUSE sales programme running at half its peak level of 1982 and set to wind down further, the government is planning to change the law to make it easier to sell of whole estates to private developers. CHRISTIAN WOLMAR reports

ALTHOUGH a handful of rundown estates have been sold, environment secretary Patrick Jenkin has admitted that 'it's a movement which is only a trickle' and he wants to see it 'become a flood'.

The problem for the government has been that the Housing Act 1980 — ironically enough, passed by the first Tory regime under the banner of improving tenants' rights — doesn't allow councils to evict tenants for selling the estate to a private developer. Currently, they can only evict if they're planning to upgrade the estate for reletting.

Consultation over

The new proposal, for which the six week consultation period ended this week, would give councils the right to evict any tenants who get in the way of schemes to clear estates for sale. The council would have to find suitable alternative accommodation and provide home loss payments for the tenants. The county court would assess whether the scheme is likely to go ahead reasonably quickly. The plan would have to have the approval of the Environment Secretary.

City Syndication

Tipped for lower office in the wearily awaited autumn Cabinet shuffle — the mad axeperson of the Environment, Patrick Jenkin

There are a number of planned sales, by both Labour and Conservative councils, which are being held up by tenants resisting the sale of their estate by refusing offers of alternative accommodation.

Tower Hamlets in East London, for example, are trying to sell the Waterlow Estate in Bethnal Green. The council has been criticised by a judge in the local county court for not having consulted with the tenants over the proposed sale and the tenants' resistance has been hardened by the fact that Tower Hamlets is Labour controlled.

Cold and damp

Fulham Court, in West London, is one of the largest estates planned for sale. There are now 150 empty flats out of 372 and all the blocks have an abandoned feel about them. They were built in the '30s and are structurally sound but dampness is rife and the only heating is from small two bar electric fires in the living rooms. They are cold even on an August day — especially this summer.

Despite the dereliction, the remaining tenants are defiant. 'Modernise don't privatise' posters are plastered on the heavy iron doors fitted to prevent squatting. The tenants feel particularly betrayed because until two years ago, Hammersmith & Fulham Council — run by Tories with Liberal support — promised full modernisation.

New windows had been fitted on all the flats and then in November 1983, the council said that the £9 million needed for modernisation wasn't available and the estate would have to be sold.

'I'll go feet-first'

'What I can't understand,' says John Franks, a tenants' association committee member, 'is that they're using up housing to take in people from Fulham Court when they've got 130 homeless families in bed and breakfast.' He wasn't aware of the proposal to bulldoze through resisting tenants but when told by the *New Statesman* he said: 'There's only one way they'll get me out and that's in a coffin.'

With less than 20,000 homes and a vigorous sales programme, the council has a small stock by inner London standards and rehousing Fulham Court residents is proving difficult. Originally two blocks were meant to have been emptied by January and sold off but they're still occupied by a couple of tenants. The first phase of the scheme involves the building of a wall between these two blocks and the rest of the estate, 'to divide us from them' as John Franks put it.

Shelter, the campaign for the homeless, is particularly worried by two aspects of the proposals. Spokesperson Tim Shotton says: 'Suitable alternative accommodation means very little in practice. Very little attention is given to local amenities, proximity to relatives or work, etc. Secondly, the county court is not the suitable place to assess whether schemes are viable and likely to be undertaken in a reasonable time. There should be a public enquiry if tenants want one.' ●

Ban by DHSS

PUBLICATION of a report and booklet on good eating habits requested by the DHSS from an independent committee headed by Dr John Garrow has been stopped — but contents have been leaked by the College of Health. The DHSS apparently objects to advice given in *Eating for a Healthy Heart:* cut down on meat, saturated fats, dairy products and many popular processed foods. Michael Young, chair of the College of Health, calls the decision 'disgraceful' and a 'bowing to the agricultural and food industries'.

Judith Cook

Peace Protests Roll Call (18)

Total arrested in UK and Eire since September 1981: 7,778

Arrests to date by location

Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp

Newbury court has been 'booked solid' for 6 weeks with trespass cases from 16 July. Approximately 8 women being heard each day. Following the hearing of the first two women on the original charge of 'entering' Greenham Common, all subsequent charges were immediately changed to 'remaining in' Greenham Common after midnight on 31 March as Shelley Makepiece and Listy Acons were found not guilty after claiming that they had not entered the base on 1 April (the day the new by-laws came into force) but on 31 March before midnight. Fines of £25 and £10 costs were generally applied.

6 August (Hiroshima Day). 18 women entered the base. 10 women reached the silo area where they found an empty silo. MoD said 'no security had been breached and there was no foundation to allegations that women had entered silo area'. All 18 were sentenced to be detained in Newbury police cells for 24 hours. Newbury police cells have not been 'approved as suitable' by the Home Office for detaining sentenced prisoners. **18**

8 August. Methodist deaconess Sister Judith Watkins appeared at Newbury magistrates charged with trespass.

8 August. Leah Thalmann and Madhu Anhas refused to be bound over to keep the peace or pay fines and were sent to prison in default. **2**

5 women detained in custody for one day after refusing to pay fines. **5**

1 woman conditionally discharged for 3 months and warrant issued for the arrest of one other woman who failed to appear.

9 August. Greenham woman Katrina Howse was sentenced to three months in jail for refusing to be 'bound over to keep the peace' on 7 counts of trespass. She was sent to prison in spite of her offer to pay the fines. **1**

9 August. 27 women arrested on Nagasaki Day after painting the base and lorry car park. Several military and commercial vehicles 'semi-permanently immobilised'. Some women paid fines. Not guilty pleas given late August and September dates. 14 women detained in Newbury police cells after sentencing but released when the court finished business at 3.30pm. **27**

Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Research Establishment **3**

9.8.85. 3 women entered centre and passed a sentry. Painted the establishment with peace slogans in remembrance of those killed in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Challenged by security police after two hours. Charged with £400 of cr. damage and possibly with 'theft of document and an MoD police hat'. The document was 'not confidential' according to MoD. Women gave out copies to many newspapers and peace groups.

USAF Welford, Berkshire **12**

9.8.85. 12 women penetrated three separate security fences at Welford — the largest US bomb storage depot in Europe which harbours mustard gas and is suspected to store chemical weapons. Women danced and sang on the silos until US officers arrived. One was overheard to say on the radio 'they are in a very sensitive area'. At the foot of the bunker where the women danced was a store of 3ft bombs marked 'Class 2' Bombs which had been transported from Greenham some weeks earlier. The women were charged with suspected criminal damage then charges dropped and they were escorted from the base.

Molesworth USAF base, Cambridgeshire **69**

27/28.7.85. 19 arrested on 'Snowball' action. Dates given to appear at Huntingdon magistrates on 19 August and 2 September. About 50 others arrested on separate actions. 29 of these were from Notts and Leicester CND.

Greenham woman Nicola Churchill annoyed at a judge's refusal to listen or heed her reasons for entering the base told him: 'If you had just one more brain cell, you'd be a plant'.

Please send new information to ***Janey Hulme*** *at the* New Statesman.

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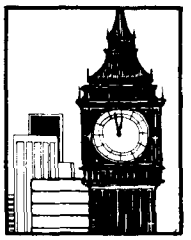

PETER KELLNER

Why we should not be beastly to the Tories

ONE DOES not have to be specially perceptive to notice that the government is in trouble. Depending which opinion poll you read, the Conservatives have lost the support of between four and six million voters since the last general election. Mrs Thatcher's personal rating is close to its lowest in 1981. Unless there is a substantial recovery in Tory fortunes, the party risks humiliation at the next election.

Ah, responds your average Tory party spokesperson: we may be doing almost as badly as in 1981; and all sorts of people then wrote off our chances of recovery. And look what happened: in 1983 we won the biggest landslide victory for 50 years. The next stage in the argument generally goes like this.

Anti-Tory: But you only won in 1983 because of the Falklands factor. It was an unprecedented, one-off event which you won't be able to repeat. You couldn't protect Grenada from the Americans and you can't save Hong Kong from the Chinese. Maybe, like the authors of that wonderful GLC-sponsored operetta, the *Metropolitan Mikado*, you are hoping for Iceland to invade Rockall. Admit it: unless something like that happens, you will lose.

Tory: My good woman, of course the Falklands war helped. But we would still have won in 1983 without it. Both Gallup and MORI found that between December 1981 and March 1982 Conservative support recovered strongly — and Mrs Thatcher's rating rose by about ten points. Argentina did not invade the Falklands until the beginning of April. Even without the Falklands factor, the Alliance would have been rumbled and Labour would have blown itself to pieces.

And so the argument could go on, each side reinterpreting what really happened between 1981 and 1983 in order to suit its own hopes for what will happen between 1985 and 1987. In truth, we all guessing. What few on the Left seemed to have considered is not so much that the Tories might do very badly next time, but that *a heavy defeat for the Conservatives could be as dangerous for its enemies as its friends.*

The Tories' recovery last time was helped by a number of factors that are unlikely to be repeated. As well as the Falklands War, the government benefitted from a succession of internal Labour conflicts, starting with the constitutional row about how to select its leader, continuing through the contest between Tony Benn and Denis Healey for the deputy leadership and the saga of Peter Tatchell and the Bermondsey by-election, and culminating in a general election campaign that plumbed hitherto unsuspected depths of incompetence and divisiveness. It is not beyond the wit of Neil Kinnock and Larry Whitty to avoid a repetition of those disasters.

As for the Alliance, its odyssey reached a climax in the autumn of 1981 with the Croydon and Crosby by-elections. As the *NS* reported at the time, Liberal and SDP candidates were also winning two-thirds of all local council by-elections. The Alliance was seldom out of the news, and almost all the coverage was favourable. Between them, David Steel and the Gang of Four managed to create the image of an irresistible political force that could do no wrong: it was all things to all voters.

That image could not last. The Tories' pre-Falklands recovery was wholly at the expense of the Alliance. (Labour's support also rose during the same period.) Today's Alliance support is of a different character. As four years ago, it is still essentially a protest vote, but I do not believe it contains the same product of media-hype as in 1981. Also, it has less far to fall: in late 1981 the Alliance's support was around 45 per cent; the latest MORI and Marplan polls both put it at 31 per cent. A collapse of blue-tinged Alliance voters back to the Tory party cannot be taken for granted.

Finally, the Tories' collapse in support during 1981 occurred at a time when the economy was visibly deteriorating. Unemployment had doubled in two years; national output had contracted; inflation was still high; productivity had fallen; and taxes had been raised.

Today, unemployment remains high but the figure is broadly stable. Inflation is up a bit on last year's 5 per cent, but still within reasonable bounds. The 'real' economy, so Mrs Thatcher never fails to remind us, has been growing for four years, productivity has risen and tax cuts are on the way. No matter that the rest of us may — and should — dispute this picture of economic health; the point is that ministers say the economy is doing well and the electorate does not believe them. And, short of big tax cuts next year and a sharp fall in unemployment, there seems little reason why the verdict of the voters should be very different in two years' time.

ON THE FACE of it, this should be a cause for joy on the Left. Mrs Thatcher would receive her comeuppance; she would almost certainly resign as party leader; her successor would be a more traditionally-minded Tory; the horrendous experiment with monetarism would not only be over, but would stand little chance of subsequent revival.

But even if all that happens, it may not be the whole story. The circumstances of a heavy Tory defeat are likely to be ones in which the Alliance parties make substantial gains. An eight per cent swing from Conservative to Alliance would mean between 60 and 70 Alliance MPs in the Commons, and Liberal and SDP candidates close behind in dozens of other seats.

The impact of this Alliance breakthrough on a Conservative opposition is likely to be very different from the rather smaller block of Alliance MPs on Labour in 1983. Then (as now) the Alliance threatens Labour by syphoning off valuable anti-Tory votes in *Labour-Tory* marginals; in only a handful of places is there a serious threat of Labour actually losing seats *to the Alliance.* Thus reality and sentiment coincide: the real enemy remains the Tories. And if, heaven help us, some kind of deal, or pact, or coalition between Labour and Alliance MPs has ever to be negotiated, it will on the whole be between parties that in general pose no direct threat to each other's seats.

A badly defeated Tory party faces an altogether different prospect. One way or other it must recreate some kind of middle-class-cum-prosperous-working-class hegemony over British politics. And there are only two ways it will be able to achieve this: either by coming to terms with the Alliance — or by smashing it.

The first tactic involves electoral reform. The Alliance would be allowed to keep its share of its middle-class spoils, while Tory moderates would expect to construct a more-or-less permanent Tory-Alliance government after each election conducted by PR. It would amount to an admission by the Tories that they could never govern alone again. No wonder that Peter Walker is so edgy at the account in the current issue of *Crossbow* that he might be a closet PR-enthusiast.

The alternative is a Tory party that goes downmarket, like a struggling tabloid newspaper engaged in a vicious circulation war. Instead of appealing to the high ground of liberal middle-class values, it would trade on popular prejudice. We caught a glimpse of the potential of this tactic in February 1978, after Mrs Thatcher spoke on television of the risk of Britain being 'swamped' by immigrants. In the following Gallup Poll, the Tories moved from level-pegging with Labour to a nine point lead.

I am not predicting either that the Tories will go down that path, or that they could win power if they did. But some deeply unpleasant sentiments could be unleashed and allowed to enter the arteries of British politics, instead of being confined to a few out-of-the-way veins. One of the advantages of a reasonably strong Tory party — even in Mrs Thatcher's Britain — is that it marginalises the nastiest right-wing extremists. We should at least ponder the thought that a heavily defeated Tory party might no longer be able to fulfil that important function. □

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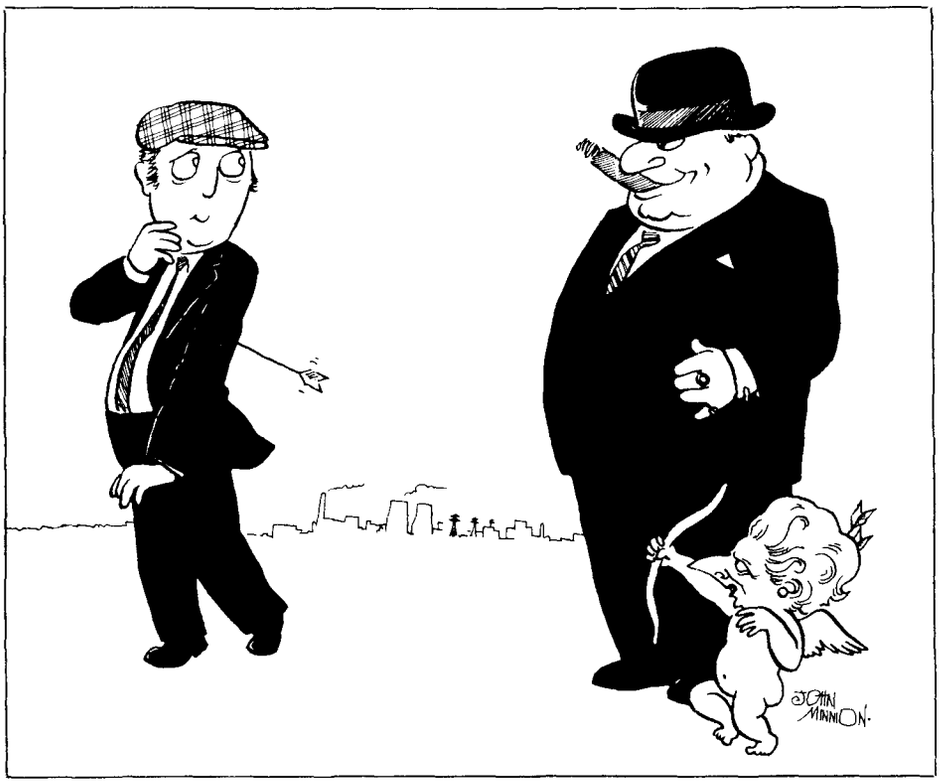
ALL CHANGE AT BLACKPOOL

As the TUC prepares for its annual conference, JOHN McILROY argues that new attitudes to employers has more to do with six years of Thatcher than the tactics of right-wing unions



John Minnion

1984 WAS Arthur Scargill's Congress. Next week at Blackpool all eyes will be pinned on the opposite end of the spectrum. For it is the policies of Eric Hammond of the electricians and Terry Duffy of the engineers which have prompted predictions of the first major split in the British labour movement this century. Flamboyant and abrasive 'go it alone' comments by leading lights of both unions, their participation together with the architects of the Nottinghamshire miners' breakaway in the right-wing 'Mainstream' grouping and statements by the normally equable TUC General Secretary, Norman Willis, on the gravity of the position have strengthened suggestions that the 117th Congress could prepare the way for an 'alternative TUC'.

The focus of the clash is Mrs Thatcher's employment laws or rather the maintenance of the programme of opposition to them agreed by all the unions the Wembley Special Conference in 1982. That programme stated quite clearly that unions should not accept government money for their internal ballots. The offer of cash, was, it was felt, a case of Greeks bearing gifts. Conditions would later be imposed which would mould the unions' balloting practice and compromise their autonomy.

The AUEW and the EETPU are fervent supporters of postal ballots and run them on lines which are close to government thinking. Their consequent applications for funds infuriated not only the TUC Left but centrist figures such as David Basnett of the General and Municipal. The 34-5 vote of the TUC General Council to start disciplinary proceedings against the AUEW — which unlike the EETPU has now taken delivery of £1.2m of public money — could lead to the suspension and eventual expulsion of both organistions.

Their response has been forceful and well argued. The TUC majority, they allege, is inconsistent and hypocritical. 'Last month at H J Heinz 4,000 members of six different unions took part in ballots on the continuation of closed shop agreements as required by the Tory legislation', claims one EETPU official. 'The TUC ban on these ballots is just as clear-cut as the ban on government money. The TGWU is the biggest union involved. It's done nothing to discipline its members and it's not being threatened with expulsion by the TUC'.

The electricians claim to have clocked nearly 100 violations of Wembley's closed shop clauses. They point out that the TUC accepts State aid for union education with clear strings such as the right of employers to vet course content. And they comment bitterly on the way many of their persecutors have amended their rules in accordance with the 1984 Trade Union Act. As Eric Hammond complained in the EETPU journal, 'Why do they insist on absolute fidelity to this one clause?'

This point has been taken by other TUC leaders such as Clive Jenkins of ASTMS, Albert Williams of the building workers and Leif Mills of the Banking Insurance and Finance Union. Already two other affiliates, the airline pilots and the colliery managers, have broken ranks and applied for finance for ballots.

At Blackpool attempts by the electricians backed by the Civil and Public Services Association to have the Wembley Accords revised will be firmly opposed by the General Council. They agree that the Wembley decisions are under strain: there have been breaches. But it would be a fatal move in the broader power game the TUC plays with the government to revise them formally and publicly. It would be seen by the Tories — and perhaps even by some Labour politicians intent on retaining parts of the legislation — as an acceptance prompted by weakness. So far, the TUC's continued formal opposition has denied the laws legitimacy.

FOR MANY ON the General Council the greatest failing of the trade union Right is its lack of political sophistication. (Right-wing union leaders say out loud what others murmur and attempt to give their practice an embarrassing coherence and rationale.) Nowhere is this clearer than in the slanging match over 'no strike' deals which will also produce explosive encounters at Blackpool. Here the EETPU has been pioneer and proselytiser. Eric Hammond's union is involved in 14 of these agreements covering around 10,000 workers, with another dozen in the pipeline. Piloted with Japanese multinationals such as Toshiba and Sanyo, they involve tight restrictions on industrial action and 'pendulum arbitration' by which a third party must not 'split the difference' but must pick between union demand and employer's offer. In return a single union is given representation rights. These agreements are usually set in a context of attempts to identify the workforce with company profitability, encourage labour mobility and stimulate direct employee involvement in decision making.

The electricians' agreement with Hitachi at Hirwaun in South Wales, in early 1984, that other unions should be excluded from the site provoked a furious reaction. Demands that the TUC act have been continual ever since.

Faced with these changes, the EETPU again retorts that the prosecution lacks clean hands. The TGWU, it is claimed, has similar arrangements on the docks and ferries and has signed a number of similar agreements through its links with the Welsh Development Agency. It is ludicrous for other unions derisively to term EETPU settlements 'sweetheart deals' when, for example, at Nissan's new factory, in the North East, the TGWU and GMBU competed — unsuccessfully — with the engineers for single-union rights whilst other

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unions looked on enviously.

A motion from APEX to Congress will ask the General Council to look at means of controlling no strike deals. The TUC has thus far refused to get involved. But it could be claimed it has given the approach some blessing. In a statement in March it suggested that the most practicable way to recruit 'might be to seek to develop relationships with employers particularly those opening new plants and to conclude agreements on the best possible terms'.

Once again it is the EETPU's style — when they recently signed such an agreement with a distribution design company, Shopco, six directors joined the union — which will stiffen opposition. But they can, with some justification, argue that their stance is strongly influencing other unions. Their single union agreement with TUC bête noir, Eddie Shah, for employees on his new national paper was followed by the announcement that SOGAT, one of the unions left out in the cold, would talk not only to Eric Hammond but would begin unilateral discussions with Rupert Murdoch on the transfer of printing to its new plant at Wapping. NGA boss Tony Dubbins has said that his union may be forced to look outside the print industry to links with unions such as the TGWU or it too could have to 'come to terms with the "new realism of sweetheart unionism".'

PLACED IN perspective these problems owe more to the painful process of readjustment which faces all unions after six years of Thatcherism than the right-wing politics of the leaders of the electricians and the engineers. The essential background to sharper conflict and competition amongst the unions is the serious loss of membership during the Thatcher years, the antagonistic economic situation and the inability of the TUC to elaborate any generally accepted strategic answers.

TUC unions now claim 9.8 million members, 230,000 fewer than last year and 2.4 million fewer than in 1979. These figures almost certainly underestimate the decline. Union performance is overall impressive: the fact that just under 50 per cent of the workforce are members compared with around 55 per cent five years ago is striking testimony to the collectivist consciousness of British workers. Comparable figures for the US, Japan and Germany would be 20 per cent, 22 per cent and 36 per cent. But in the end it's members or more accurately contributions that count. Outside the public utilities, where NALGO and NUPE have remained relatively stable, the figures — APEX down 37 per cent since 1979, TGWU down 20 per cent, EETPU down 15 per cent — tell their own story.

In this context the increased managerial power produced by the government's economic and legislative policies has been used to introduce new technologies and remake workplace industrial relations. The miners, the railways, the post office and the print are only the most recent and most visible flashpoints. The strategy of greater management control to reduce labour costs has manifested itself in bypassing unions in favour of a direct approach to employees, decentralising bargaining units, undermining the ability to take industrial action. ▷

ELECTRICIANS VOLUNTEER FOR THE CROSSFIRE

THE ELECTRICIANS' union has long been pushing its luck by stomping on the toes of both left and right wing unions. But clever tactics may still mean it will escape being expelled from the TUC over taking government money for postal ballots.

Eric Hammond, the general secretary of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Trade Union, has been baiting the TUC since last November with the threat to defy the policy agreed at the special Wembley conference and take government money. Meanwhile the engineering union has actually received its £1.2 million. Hammond admits that the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers got the money first because the EETPU hadn't exactly been pushing for its claim to be met.

The timing means it is the AUEW that is being asked to account for its breach of TUC

EETPU's Hammond: following vigorously in the footsteps of Frank Chapple

policy and which faces the more immediate threat of expulsion. The prospect of expelling the largest craft union with 1,000,000 members is a far more serious step for the TUC to contemplate. Should the AUEW be shown the door, the EETPU will follow and a nucleus will exist for the creation of an alternative TUC.

Hammond's view is that a glimpse of the consequences will be enough to encourage the TUC to draw back. The ballots on political funds have restored union confidence and there is real optimism about the improved prospects of a future change of government. A major split among unions would, he reckons, create enough confusion and disarray to put in jeopardy the prospect of a Labour government. That vision will mean there is a search for 'a sensible compromise', he says, but the compromise will not include his union withdrawing its application for government money.

'We're determined to take the money. The cost of the political ballot would empty the political fund. That's utter nonsense,' he says.

The expulsion of either the EETPU or the AUEW would intensify the scramble for members in manufacturing industry. The EETPU shows no fear of the impact of the end of the 'Bridlington rules', which prevent unions openly poaching members from other unions. Hammond is confident that the net gain would be to his union. On current showing, that may not be just bravado. The shift in manufacturing to the multi-skilled craftsman is a base on which the EETPU has built. It has been offering employers a package that includes not just the notorious 'no strike' provisions, but flexible working across a variety of skills.

Other unions are angry at the way the EETPU has moved to offer employers 'single union' deals. The recent deals with Eddie Shah will effectively exclude the traditional print union, the National Graphical Association. Hammond has little time for concerns that the NGA is being trampled upon. The EETPU had offered a deal on new technology to the NGA three years ago that had been turned down. 'Machines will be doing their jobs,' he says. 'We follow the technology.'

Single union deals will come under fire at the TUC in Blackpool next week from the right-wing white-collar union, the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff.

Hammond is ready to flourish the list prepared by his research department of other unions that have signed 'single union' deals. And, to some extent, other unions *have* been offering similar deals, often because it is the only way to compete.

The EETPU has been talking to the AUEW and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs about the creation of a new grouping that would be able to take advantage of the 'technician grade' that is developing in industry. Hammond insists that talks have not been in the context of any split from the TUC.

The AUEW might not feel as confident about its ability to ward off other unions in engineering. It has already seen the white-collar union, TASS, absorb the smaller craft unions in engineering. Any deal done to keep the AUEW within the fold will therefore also benefit the EETPU.

Geraldine Hackett

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All unions are affected. Two examples amongst scores: at Shell's Carrington Plant this spring the shop stewards representing a range of unions and famous during the '60s and '70s for their militancy accepted without negotiations and under the threat of redundancy a revolutionary package which tore up craft demarcations and process worker and white collar grades, achieving almost complete flexibility of labour. A similar transformation of working practices was accepted by the AUEW at the automatic transmission company Borg-Warner's Glamorgan plant. The union also agreed a six-year deal involving the end of full-time shop stewards. Acceptance of the company's avowed strategy of replacing struggle between management and worker with struggle between united company and competitors was symbolised by provisions that in future the workforce would own and service their machines.

It is doubtful whether the tensions which will surface at Blackpool will produce a split with the hard Right at least in the medium term. Potential partners such as the unpredictable dissident miners and the professional bodies such as the breakaway rail workers and teachers with less than 30,000 members are unseductive. And while the Right may be tempted to break away from, at least, the TUC consensus, it will be held in check by the knowledge that there are other powerful destabilising forces in the wings. The AUEW would be open to dismemberment if deprived of the shield of the TUC's Bridlington procedure. Financial pressures to amalgamate are strong and TASS is a particularly hungry predator. It has already scooped up three unions, including the tobacco workers and pattern makers, seductive as much for their politics as for any industrial connection. The Communist Party had traditionally made preserving unity one of its chief criteria for union policies. Now that many CP hardliners are no longer under party discipline — either, like TASS's Ken Gill, through party expulsions or through disaffection — there will be stronger pressure for new Left alliances between unions.

The General Council will be juggling with these tendencies so that it itself can strike the right balance between a posture defiant of government and employers and a practice which is far more pliant. It is hanging on for the one thing that will make life endurable again and undermine the case for drastic change: the return of a Labour government on the back of party-union partnership. □

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

□Nigel Dempster maintains that there is a strict code of entry to his page. You must be titled and have done something interesting. Lady Teresa Manners, for instance, is Dempstered because she drove at over 100 miles per hour in a fond embrace. Her sister Lottie lives quietly in the country and so is left alone. You may also be included if you are very rich and have some relevance to the Great British Public. — *'Women's Journal'* (Mary Manners Simpson)

MYTHS OF ADDICTION

Media coverage of Merseyside has failed to analyse the true nature of the drug problem, reports IAN WILLIAMS

ON THE HOARDINGS of Liverpool's Lime St, greeting the journalists as they step off the train, are three posters, lined up like a Byzantine Triptych. In the centre, in place of the crucifixion, is the government's drug poster, warning of the effects and pointing to the stigmata of heroin. On either side are posters for Embassy Regal and the Carlsberg Lager favoured by young disco drinkers. These, says Alan Parry, regional Drugs Training Officer, are far more widespread

Derek Massey

'How can you blame kids for wanting to escape from all this?'

forms of martyrdom. 'Heroin's only in the Fourth Division for health risks.'

The irony is lost on the doorsteppers of Fleet St chasing up more horror stories from whichever of Merseyside's sprawling council built suburbs is the current 'Smack City'. They have been calling in at Alan Parry's office for a briefing before going to cover the story off the overdose death of 14-year-old Jason FitzSimmons. They don't appear to have listened much, judging by the resulting articles. His bereaved parents have been pilloried, and Jason himself has had a criminal record posthumously exhumed and shouted from the roof tops. But none of the sleuths seems to have had a look around at the economic and social pit that spawned the problem, nor the multinational food, drink and drug firms and their influence over government policy.

Alan Parry himself is resigned to the tendentious headlines. 'People ask, "What's the answer?" But they won't get the right answer, because they're asking the wrong questions!' He maintains that the problem is an almost inescapable consequence of the catastrophic decline of Merseyside. In the large council estates, which it is a ghastly irony to call *working* class, 'it's not just in the environment, the decay's in people's heads. How can you blame kids for wanting to escape from all this?'

Sorting out the mythologies, he is not even sure that 'addiction' is accurate. While the press crowded into Croxteth, the death through alcoholic poisoning of a lad in Bootle the week before was barely mentioned. Over 90 per cent of the clients smoke heroin rather than inject it. Their problem is the things they have to do to support the habit more than the direct medical effects. He even refers to the pushers without the venom that has become obligatory.

Most of the small-scale pushers he claims are also users, and as the police swamp one area, both customers and suppliers go elsewhere until the spotlight of media and consequent constabulary attention moves on. You could say, he claims wryly, that this type of action just spreads the heroin problem since it does nothing at all for the horrifying social problems which give rise to it. He does carefully stress that the heroin habit drastically worsens rather than ameliorates the lives of young people.

There is a six to eight week waiting list for dependency treatment in Liverpool — and a stunning six months in the Wirral. This is because, says Sylvia Hikins, chair of the Community Health Council, of the cash limits imposed by, yes, that very same government that will bar no holds in stamping out addiction.

Despite a welcome for support and *informed* awareness in the community about the problem, there is concern that press-fuelled hysteria can lead to vigilante action against alleged pushers, who may just be users, or even just someone unpopular with a neighbour. Once malicious people denounced neighbours to the witch-hunter. These days they shop them to the DHSS snoopers or, most recently, they accuse them of pushing.

And almost anything you do to a pusher is socially acceptable. The press don't distinguish between cannabis and heroin. Alan pointed out the prominence that was given to the cannabis which was found, along with heroin and methadone, in Jason's bloodstream. In a recent case on the Wirral, while the autopsy found excessive alcohol as well as heroin, it was the heroin which the press featured.

YET THE MAJOR drug and health problem on Merseyside is alcohol abuse, says Alan Parry — and no one would dream of kicking in the doors of a pub selling drink to underage kids. 'Do you know, there are pubs where 17-year-olds won't go in — because they're full of kids!' ▷

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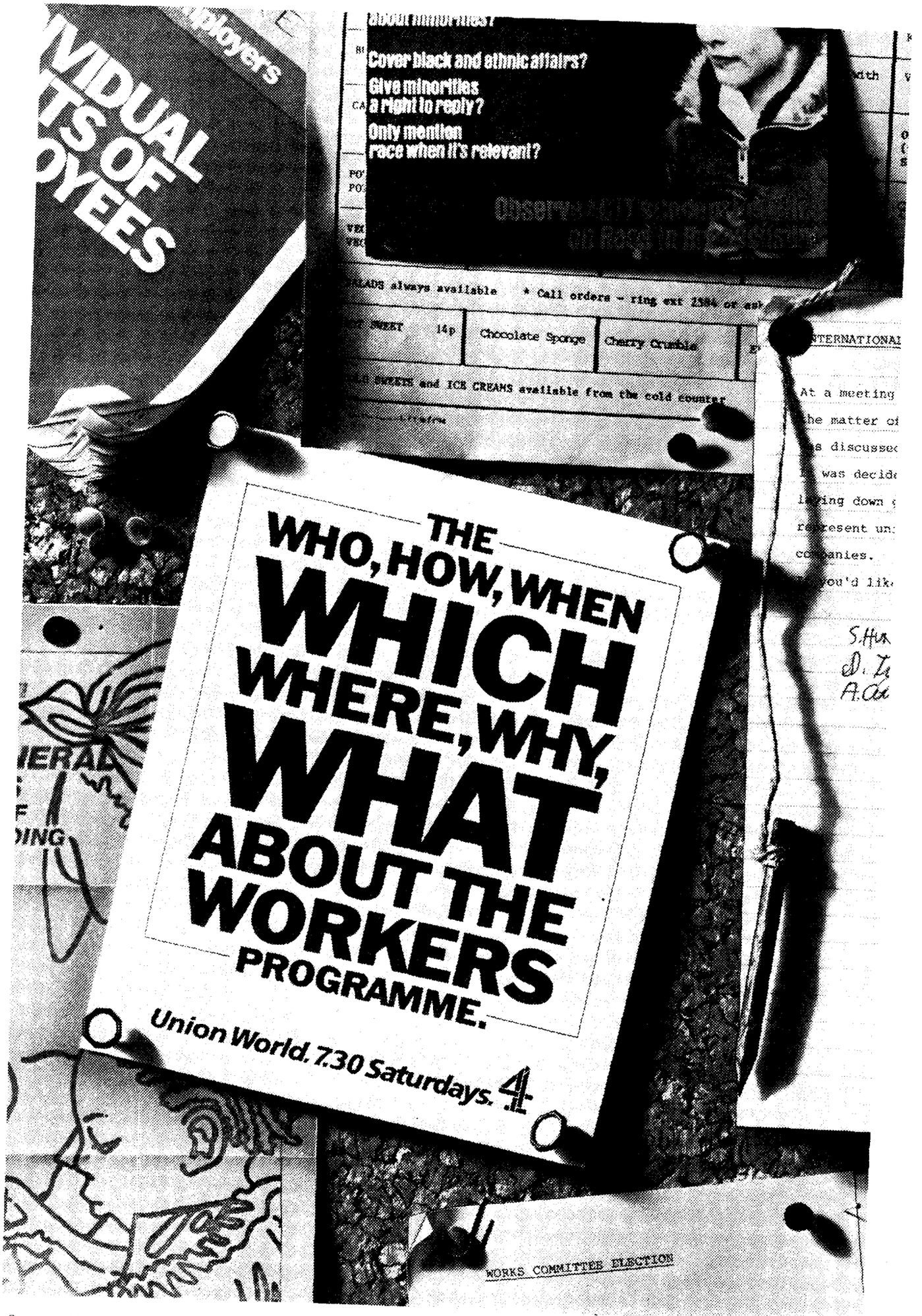
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Ironically, one of the few parts of the city which has remained relatively free from the youth heroin problem is the black 'ghetto' of Liverpool 8 in Toxteth — allegedly a no-go area for police. Cannabis it has had. But for many people in the area smoking ganja is seen as being no different from having a quick half in the pub.

Over the weekend of Toxteth's Carnival, a do-it-yourself 'Anti-Smack' Squad broke into pushers' houses and ransacked them. There was remarkable restraint in the police's formal exhortations 'not to take the law into their own hands', reflecting the widespread feeling that the youth of the community had enough problems without the addition of heroin usage. Delroy Burris, of the Liverpool Black Organisation, speaking on behalf of the Anti-Smack league, has no compunctions about the selectivity of its targets. 'No one's ever died from smoking cannabis' he says, 'but the league have had actual heroin addicts assisting in identifying the big pushers. One of them told us he was willing to risk his own sources of supply to stop others being put through the same misery that he's had.' He claims popular support. 'The neighbours came out and applauded when the raids were going on. These people are *loaded* and there's big muscle behind them. But we've got the whole community behind us!'

Chief Inspector Peter Deary, head of Merseyside's Drug Squad, looks at things differently. His 'muscle' is 15 men, soon to be increased to 33. He argues that medical experts say that cannabis is the first step on the rocky road to harder hits, even while admitting that this doesn't seem to have followed in that particular area.

While sympathising with the anger, he is of course against the vigilantes. 'They don't even always get the right people,' he says. He clearly sees himself in a position not unlike the little boy plugging the hole in the dyke with his finger, while leaks spring everywhere around him. 'I've just got back from two weeks dealing with the media, and chasing up the Jason FitzSimmons case,' he says resignedly, 'and I hope there's nothing important in this fortnight's pile of letters on my desk. When the press have gone away, I can get back to work.'

Which is not an option open to the young people for whom unemployment has become a profession handed down from generation to generation, in the estates where respectably and legally prescribed valium is the housewife's helper. □

'And ever more came out of that same door wherein I went' . . .

This was the plaint of a man who could not escape the common round of conventional answers to his questions. Perhaps he was stuck in beliefs — maybe even sacred ones — but he was stuck. Is there no way out?

Perhaps; if you would like to see, write to:

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SCARE HITS WOMEN NOT GAY MEN ALONE

VERONICA GROOCOCK listens to the voices of women whose life has been affected by the spread of AIDS

'I THINK MOST of us are ostriches when it comes to facing reality. We bury our heads in the sand in terms of the risks of having — say — a fatal heart attack or car accident. I suppose we do the same with AIDS. . .' Sentiments voiced six months ago by Rita, 28, a nurse whose husband is gay. They have a three-year-old son.

They have since separated after seven years of marriage, because of Derek's increasing involvement in the gay scene. Underpinning her sense of loss, Rita now admits to feeling 'relieved — that I am not exposed to this (risk) any more.'

Rita and Derek met and married in New Zealand and moved to England 18 months ago. Derek had been undergoing psychotherapy to help him resolve his feelings about being gay. They came to live in the Brighton area, a traditional mecca for gays, and 'the whole Pandora's box just opened up' for him. Rita would leave for night duty at 11pm, knowing that shortly afterwards Derek would come home with a male lover for the night.

He was apprehensive about AIDS but took the line: 'It won't happen to me'. 'He is ultra-careful. Most gay men get VD at some stage, but Derek hasn't.' Nevertheless, she did try to persuade him to attend the local clinic, just as a precaution. He declined.

Rita now fears the possibility, however remote, that she might expose someone to the AIDS virus. Consequently, she has stopped donating blood (she used to be a regular donor) and thrown away her kidney donor card.

The realisation that the disease can affect a much wider section of the population than was at first thought has radically altered the public's perception of AIDS. According to a Belgian researcher, almost as many women as men are carriers of the disease in parts of Central Africa, and it should be regarded as a sexually transmitted disease affecting both sexes.

The net of 'at risk' groups has widened, from male homosexuals, haemophiliacs and drug addicts, to include heterosexual men (eg businessmen visiting prostitutes in Europe) and women, especially prostitutes and the partners of gay or bisexual men. This should help to remove the witchhunt mentality that greeted the initial arrival of AIDS in Britain. But for women, who had felt secure from the threat of this morally overloaded disease, the knowledge that they too may be at risk can be shattering.

SUE, 30, LEFT her husband nearly three years ago, when he formed a serious relationship with another man. They still get on very well, but had they stayed together she doubts whether they would have continued to share a bed, due to the AIDS risk.

Her chief worry now is for their two sons (aged five and three). 'They see their dad every couple of weeks and have also come into contact with his boyfriends. So it does cross my mind. We have touched on this subject. His attitude is: "AIDS is just one of those risks we have to live with".'

Since Christine and her husband stopped having sex a few years ago she has had a regular male lover. She feels that all women who carry on having intercourse with their gay or bisexual husbands — especially those who go in for casual sex — are playing with fire.

She has known of her husband's homosexuality for the last 14 years of their 25-year marriage. 'He only has one partner. He has never been the promiscuous type. I don't have any particular worries. I know he would be extremely careful. AIDS has made all gay men much more cautious, and a lot of the promiscuous ones have adjusted their behaviour.'

When the AIDS scare first reached Britain, she felt sad, 'because I could see it would turn public opinion against male gays. They are suffering more than anyone else.'

Wanda, 25 and married to Terry, believes that the AIDS furore has been 'blown up out of all proportion' by the media. She was fully aware of Terry's gayness when she married him six years ago, and they have an open marriage. 'He brings a bloke home and I sleep in the spare room. It doesn't bother me, because Terry is not the sort of bloke who has one-night stands. The relationships he has are fairly longstanding, and with people well-known to both of us.'

But how can Terry ever be certain that the other men in his life are equally meticulous? Wanda concedes there *is* a risk, from which she is not immune, but that she could just as easily contract AIDS from blood transfusions as from her relationship with a gay man.

WHILE GAY AND bisexual men and their partners should be free to conduct their lives without being crippled by fear and panic, Wanda's apparent indifference to her own high-risk situation is not representative of the gay community's feelings on the subject. At the peak of AIDS publicity in March, London Gay Switchboard was getting around 500 calls about AIDS a week. It's still running at over 70 calls a week. The vast majority are from gay or bisexual men, but there have been a growing number of calls from heterosexuals of both sexes, as well as from women who have had artificial insemination with a gay man.

'In recent months', said press officer Hugh Robertson, 'gay men have been strongly

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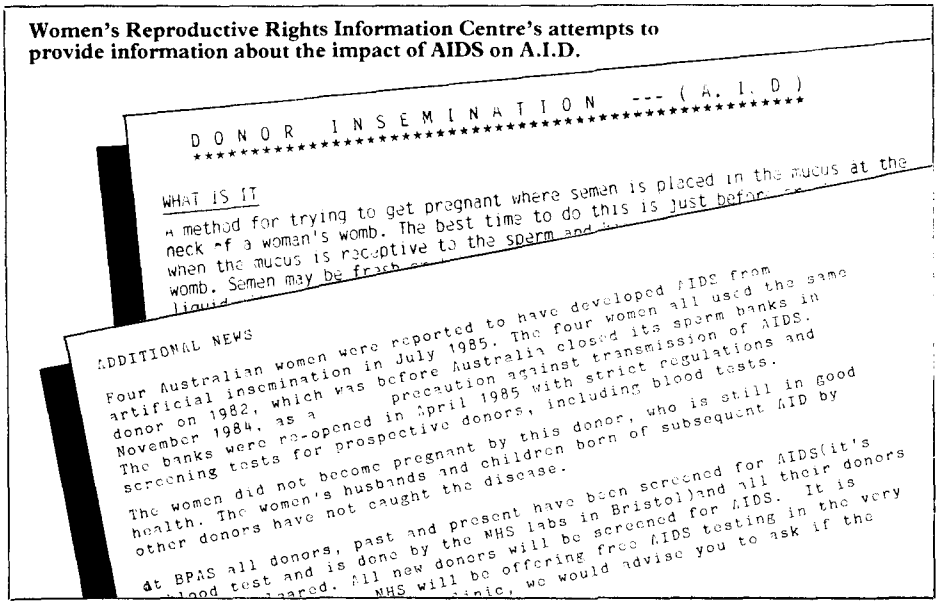
Women's Reproductive Rights Information Centre's attempts to provide information about the impact of AIDS on A.I.D.



DONOR INSEMINATION --- (A.I.D)

WHAT IS IT

A method for trying to get pregnant where semen is placed in the mucus at the neck of a woman's womb. The best time to do this is just before ... when the mucus is receptive to the sperm and ... womb. Semen may be fresh or ... liquid ...

ADDITIONAL NEWS

Four Australian women were reported to have developed AIDS from artificial insemination in July 1985. The four women all used the same donor on 1982, which was before Australia closed its sperm banks in November 1984, as a precaution against transmission of AIDS. The banks were re-opened in April 1985 with strict regulations and screening tests for prospective donors, including blood tests.

The women did not become pregnant by this donor, who is still in good health. The women's husbands and children born of subsequent AID by other donors have not caught the disease.

At BPAS all donors, past and present have been screened for AIDS(it's blood test and is done by the NHS labs in Bristol)and all their donors ... cleared. All new donors will be screened for AIDS. It is ... NHS will be offering free AIDS testing in the very ... clinic, we would advise you to ask if the ...

discouraged from being donors, and we would advise any woman wanting to carry out self-insemination that a homosexual donor is likely to be in a high-risk group.'

Ironically, Lesbian Line's response was more guarded, even sceptical. Back in February, some women callers were 'panicking' simply because they had been frequenting 'mixed' gay clubs. Now, a spokeswoman asserted, women were more at risk from what the Press chose to say about AIDS than from the disease itself.

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service is screening both new and existing donors for AIDS. All have now apparently been cleared. 'Once a man is at all off-colour' says their scientific officer, Dr Sue Gregson, 'his sperm is the first thing to suffer and would therefore be rejected automatically. We haven't yet sorted out how often to re-test donors, but we are waiting for a lead on this from Oxford Public Health Laboratory'.

She thinks the risks are 'minute' as things stand, but not yet zero. BPAS are urging gay men not to become donors.

Meanwhile, women seeking artificial insemination are advised to:

a) choose one of the bigger clinics, where the choice of donors is greater and frozen semen is more likely to be used; and
b) check, during counselling, what screening arrangements are available.

Women who belong to self-insemination groups have 'pretty good grounds' for worrying about AIDS, because of the tendency to use gay men as donors, say the Women's Reproductive Rights Information Centre. A spokeswoman cites the recent case of the four Australian women who contracted the disease from the same donor via artificial insemination.

Since the Warnock Report the centre has received 'a tremendous number' of enquiries about artificial insemination and self-insemination, from both lesbian and single women. The WRRIC spokeswoman was against actively discouraging the entire gay male population from becoming donors (the policy applied to blood donors) because it smacked of 'hidden discrimination'. It assumes that they (and only they) are all likely to have the disease despite evidence that heterosexual men are also at risk.

John, gay and married, compares the arrival of AIDS in Britain to the early outbreak of syphilis which, he points out, was brought about by promiscuity and not heterosexuality as such. Just as nobody 'blamed' heterosexuals for syphilis, gay men should not be stigmatized as responsible for AIDS. The 'gay plague' tag may make a convenient scapegoat out of an already beleaguered minority, but AIDS is a product of the lifestyle of a much wider spectrum of society. □

TRADE UNION CONGRESS 1985
GLC FRINGE MEETINGS

The GLC invites delegates and visitors to the 1985 Trades Union Congress to the following fringe meetings:

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN USE THEIR PURCHASING POWER TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Speakers
JOHN CARR
Chair GLC Staff Committee
LINDA SMITH
Head, GLC Contract Compliance Unit
chair
BILL MORRIS
National Secretary TGWU
Commissioner, Commission for Racial Equality

12.45pm – 2.00pm
MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

WINDSOR BAR, WINTER GARDENS, CHURCH STREET, BLACKPOOL
*Children welcome
*Wheelchair access via lift in Coronation Street Private Entrance
*Refreshments

JOBS FOR A CHANGE
WHAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN DO – THE GLC EXPERIENCE

speakers
KEN LIVINGSTONE
Leader, GLC
FRANCES MORRELL
Leader, ILEA
MARGARET PROSSER
National Officer, TGWU
chair
MICHAEL WARD
Deputy Leader, GLC.
Chair, GLC Industry & Employment Committee

5.30pm
TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER

BUCKINGHAM ROOM, PEMBROKE HOTEL, NORTH PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL
*Children welcome
*Access for people with disabilities

WOMEN'S COMMITTEES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WORKING FOR WOMEN AT WORK & IN THE COMMUNITY

speakers
VALERIE WISE
Chair, GLC Women's Committee
MANDY SNELL
GLC Women's Committee Support Unit

12.45pm – 2.00pm
WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

OPERA HOUSE CIRCLE LOUNGE BAR, WINTER GARDENS & OPERA HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, BLACKPOOL
*Children welcome
*Wheelchair access via Opera House Theatre front lift
*Refreshments

The GLC always endeavours to hold meetings at venues where there is access for people with disabilities. Where this is not possible, the Council will ensure that staff are on hand to give assistance if required.

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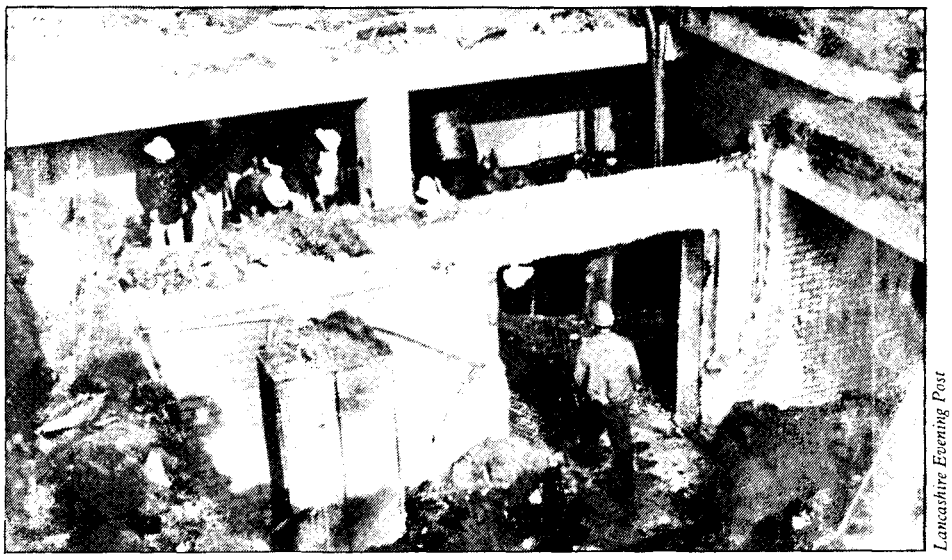

Lancashire Evening Post

WHO WILL PAY THE VICTIMS?

Fourteen months after the Abbeystead methane gas explosion in Lancashire (above), villagers are still waiting for compensation. MARK GALLOWAY reports

RON WEILD, headteacher of a Lancashire primary school, cooks tea for his 12-year-old son, Andrew. They talk animatedly about school and their plans for the week. What they rarely talk about is the night 15 months ago when Andrew's parents went out, for a guided tour of the nearby Abbeystead waterworks. They ended up critically ill in a Lancaster hospital. Ron survived; his wife Penny did not.

The tour was arranged for the villagers of St Michael's-on-Wyre. They were worried that a new water transfer scheme was causing floods in the village. So the scheme's operators, the North West Water Authority, invited them along to have a look. Ron recalls the visit: 'The 23rd of May 1984. Yes, it was a beautiful evening, at least that's the way it started out. There were so many of us going from the village, it was regarded as a social event and the weather couldn't have been better.'

But before the evening was out, the fate of the innocent villagers was headline news. A methane gas explosion killed 16 people and injured 28. The explosion was horrific. Villagers who'd survived the blast wandered around in a daze, with blackened faces and their clothes in shreds. Ron's camera case was welded to his hand.

Today, 15 months on, Ron is a widower and still suffers from terrible burns. Like many villagers he has to wear cotton gloves to protect his hands. But above all he feels that what began as a terrible personal tragedy has become a public scandal. Anger is beginning to show itself in a previously tranquil community. As Ron says: 'Those of us who were injured weren't in much of a condition to feel this at first, we were too busy trying to recover. But now you begin to piece things together and realise the manner in which we're being treated.'

Colin Burke, another villager, was relatively lucky. With both his legs crushed at Abbeystead and his spine, liver and kidneys all damaged, he came close to death. 'If ever I get depressed' he told me 'I just go to the churchyard and look at the space where I should be.' Unable to return to work, all he asks for is his wages — 'enough money to carry on as before.'

He and his fellow villagers assumed they would automatically be compensated for their injuries and bereavement. At one point, the villagers had been given grounds for optimism. John Gummer, the junior Environment Minister, told a private meeting at St Michael's shortly after the incident that he couldn't foresee any problems about compensation. He even said that if a tramp had been injured while on Water Authority property he too would have been compensated.

BUT THE VILLAGE was ignorant about British justice. Faced with a denial of responsibility by the Water Authority, the victims of Abbeystead are now set for a long, hard, expensive court battle. They have to prove that 'on the balance of probabilities' someone was negligent. If they had lived elsewhere — New Zealand for instance — they would have been compensated straightaway. There, personal injury is governed by what's called strict liability — if you hurt someone you pay up. But in Britain — although a change in the law was urged seven years ago by the Pearson Report — successive governments have declined to find the parliamentary time to change the law.

But what of the Water Authority's sense of responsibility? Its Chairman, George Mann, commented: 'Well of course we have a sense of responsibility because we invited the people there. But we carry a huge premium on insurance. That is being dealt with by our insurers and we've got to leave it there.'

Many of the villagers feel they are no longer fighting the Water Authority but its various insurers. It's not yet known when the actions will be heard, but those villagers who have already suffered considerably may eventually lose the will to fight because of the long delays. And, as one victim told me: 'If only those affected by the Bradford football fire could see how easy it is to be in the news one day but forgotten about a few months later'.

The villagers have a strong case for negligence. The government's Health and Safety Executive spent eight months looking at the incident, but finally backed away from a prosecution. It found that the water-carrying tunnel was not vented to the open air at the Abbeystead end, but into a confined space, the valve house itself. It was when the visitors were in the valve house that the explosion took place.

The cause was methane gas. It had found its way into the tunnel, dissolved under pressure in ground water which seeped through the cracks in the tunnel's lining. The gas was released into the tunnel's atmosphere. As the pumps were turned on, the water pushed the explosive gas ahead of it.

Although the HSE declared that 'design shortcomings' led to the accident, it decided that the presence of methane could not have been foreseen by the scheme's designers, Binnie and Partners of London. The HSE report left a number of questions unanswered. Should this leading international civil engineering company have known about other incidents, mainly abroad, in which dissolved methane had been a problem? Should they also have known that there was evidence to suggest coal seams in the area carrying with them a strong possibility of methane?

New evidence emerges next week in a Yorkshire Television documentary to be shown on Tuesday. The programme quotes an operating manual for the scheme instructing the Water Authority to inspect the tunnel 'at least once in every three years', when gas would have been detected. But it was not inspected for four and a half years prior to the explosion. Water Authority chairman George Mann comments: 'It was due to be done. For some reason we didn't get around to it'.

Also in the programme, tunnellers who worked on the scheme say they reported headaches on a number of occasions which they thought might be due to gas. The HSE report failed to mention whether it had seen the tunnel logs in which these incidents would have been recorded. When asked, what they saw, they 'saw all the relevant information'.

However strong the villagers' case for negligence, there is no guarantee they will win their case in court. Given the law on proving negligence, both the North West Water Authority and the leading civil engineering company, anxious to defend its reputation abroad, will feel obliged to prepare their cases well. If the law were to be changed, the villagers would have their compensation today. As Ron Weild comments: 'It won't replace a wife and mother, it can never do that, but at least it can go some way towards alleviating the suffering. The foundations of my life have been wiped away.' □

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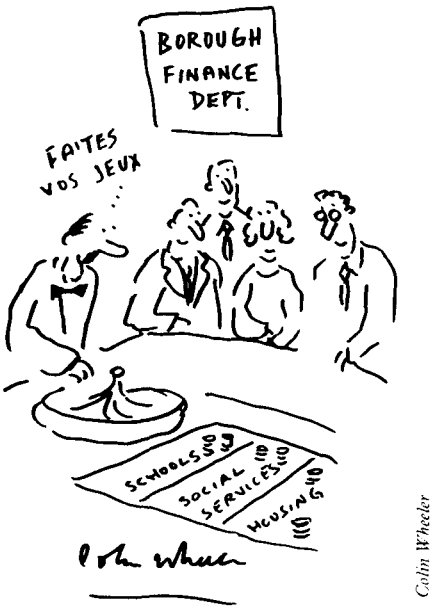
COUNCIL TREASURES

Those much maligned people, council accountants, have saved many a left-wing reputation, writes TONY TRAVERS



Colin Wheeler

PATRICK JENKIN has announced that the much-hated system of local government spending targets and grant penalties is to be scrapped. In its place, the government intends to tighten up the underlying block grant arrangements in such a way as to keep up pressure on higher-spending councils. This means that as 1986-7 approaches, councillors and treasurers will have to cope with a major re-casting of the Rate Support Grant system on top of a second round of rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties.

New policy and legislation no longer cause much surprise in local government, given the torrent of new law and policy which have flowed out of the Department of the Environment since 1980. England and Wales have been affected by the Local Government, Planning and Land Act, 1980; the Local Government Finance Act, 1982; the Local Government (Interim Provisions) Act, 1984; the Rates Act, 1984 and the Local Government Act, 1985. In addition, there have been other new laws which have affected local authorities (eg the London Regional Transport Act, 1984). Scotland has also seen much new local government law.

All this has ensured that there is never a year when there is a financial regime like that in any other year. The Rate Support Grant arrangements inherited from the last Labour government in 1979-80 were altered in 1980-1 by the addition of 'transitional arrangements' to penalise high spending authorities. In 1981-2, a new 'block grant' was introduced by Michael Heseltine, though it was amended just before the start of the year to include expenditure targets. In each year from 1982-3 to 1985-6, block grant was operated with different arrangements for targets and grant penalties.

On top of the relentless amendment of the grant system, control has been taken over the signing of most contracts in the GLC and metropolitan counties; rates have been capped in a number of authorities and now seven major councils are to be abolished. Local government has rarely been such a hot political issue. Yet, as far as the government is concerned, the results of all this legislation must have been bitterly disappointing.

When the government published its White Paper on Rates in August 1983, local authority current spending in 1983-4 was no less than 12 per cent higher — in real terms — than the Tories' original plan for that year, and higher in real terms than at the time of the 1979 election. Since 1983-4, current spending has moved up still further. Neither block grant, nor targets and penalties, nor rate-capping have moved spending swiftly downwards. The government has had to comfort itself with the thought that local government current expenditure has not risen as quickly as it did in the early 1970s.

The Labour-controlled authorities which have been campaigning against the cuts have to some extent been helping the government. As successive initiatives have failed to rein in spending, the rhetoric of cuts (coupled with the fact that real and deep cuts *have* been made in some areas) have given the impression that local government has had to cut back. In addition, there has been a shift of resources out of some services (eg education, refuse collection) and into others (eg police, social services). Capital spending has continued to fall.

WITHIN THOSE authorities which have managed to maintain or increase their spending, much credit must go to local finance officers for the creative way in which councils have been able to survive first targets and then rate capping. David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield City Council, made clear the importance of these officers at the recent Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy conference: 'It is, ironically, the most conservative, and often dubbed the most reactionary of all, the treasurer or finance officer, who has shown the greatest ingenuity and initiative of all. . . Creative accountancy has saved the day in many local authorities'.

This was praise indeed from a leader who commands respect from all sides in local government. He is not alone. The benefits of a bright and creative treasurer are now unquestioned in the annual battle to keep up spending and staff numbers. The status of treasurers has consequently risen.

If left-wing councillors underestimated them, so did the DoE, even though it knew it was going to have its work cut out when it came to devising watertight control schemes. The theoretical intentions of targets and penalties, ie to cut spending, were turned on their heads by creativity in local government. According to a recent report by the Comptroller and Auditor General 'some authorities have judged it

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expedient not to restrain expenditure in the short term in order to maximise grant over a longer period'.

The treasurers have used devices which are, by and large, not new. They have increasingly manipulated their reserves in order to get the best deal possible for their ratepayers. For example, treasurers have 'moved' expenditure from one year to another in order to minimise grant penalties. Because one pound of spending in one year may incur more penalties than in another year, there are advantages in transferring spending from one year to another. This has been done by putting money into a 'special fund' in the year when penalties were low and then taking it out of the fund — to buy staff or services — in a year when penalties were tougher. In accounting terms, the money counts as spending in the year when it entered the fund not when it was removed.

Treasurers have in some cases encouraged their members to keep up spending at budget time, even if this meant incurring penalties, in order that their targets for the following year (which have been set by reference to budgets) would be as high as possible. Spending could then fall somewhat later in the year in order to bring in more grant. It has also been possible to do such things as re-define items of current expenditure so that they counted as capital spending and, most importantly, to keep most of what was going on hidden.

The ability of local treasurers to keep their books a mystery to DoE officials has made the operation of rate capping very difficult for the government. When it came to setting expenditure levels and then rate caps for the authorities selected for capping, Whitehall was faced with little up-to-date information on such subjects as real expenditure levels, financial reserves or authorities' commitments. Because of the government's need to be seen as behaving reasonably (in case of legal challenge), and in the face of this lack of up-to-date information, the DoE had to set figures for rate capping in 1985-6 which were relatively generous. Consequently, few if any of the cuts which were originally predicted for 1985-6 have actually taken place. Rates have *fallen* in some authorities simply because the government has ensured that their Rate Support Grant has increased.

Although spending has been preserved in many authorities, the quality of the information flowing from local to central government has badly deteriorated. Many authorities' published spending figures are quite different from their actual expenditure on staff and services. Much information is deliberately kept out of sight of civil servants. This, plus the lack of assistance from the GLC and metropolitan counties, is making it difficult for DoE to plan for abolition.

In short, targets and penalties — and latterly rate capping — have failed to achieve the government's objectives. The new financial environment has given fresh impetus to the traditionally conservative world of local authority accountancy. Now targets and penalties are to be abolished. It is just possible that scrapping controls will, in the end, lead to *lower* spending: even the government no longer believes that targets and penalties were an effective control. What a pity so much wasted effort was required to prove it. □

United go fishing in Fleet Street

Michael Leapman

WE NEED not cry for Lord Matthews. Like an Australian cricket captain complaining about umpires, the beleaguered owner of the *Express* group sent up a howl of anguish last week when the Monopolies Commission declined to outlaw a bid for his Fleet Holdings by United Newspapers.

'It seems that after this anything goes,' he said petulantly. 'The concentration of newspaper ownership means less freedom of the press . . . Where two companies of this size are concerned it is not sufficient for the Commission to rule that a merger is not against the public interest. The government is not practising what it preaches . . . It makes you a bit cynical.'

'Hypocritical' rather than 'cynical' is the word that springs to mind. For the Monopolies Commission is practising precisely what the government preaches — and preaches to the sound of the *Express* and the other Tory papers cheering it on from the pews.

Certainly Matthews would not have welcomed intervention by the Monopolies Commission or anyone else when, as managing director of Trafalgar House, he orchestrated the conglomerate's successful bid for the *Express* group in 1977. Nor did he seek Whitehall's permission for the group's de-merger from Trafalgar House five years later — a manoeuvre that, while highly profitable, made the newspapers vulnerable for the first time to takeover pressure in the stock market.

When Fleet Holdings was floated as an independent company in 1982 the shares stood at 20p. Last week they were up to 345p. Lord Matthews has 3 per cent of the stock, today worth £6.4 million. If the United bid brings an end to his short career as a press baron at the age of 65, he will not have to live on his pension or deprive himself of life's little luxuries. And his resistance to the takeover means that David Stevens, chairman of United, may have to increase the offer, to the further benefit of Matthews and other Fleet shareholders.

But why should it matter to the rest of us, this fight between two tycoons for control of a couple of Tory papers and the *Star*, a tabloid of indeterminate political persuasion? Because, as the Monopolies Commission report indicates, there are wider issues beneath the surface. The report lauds Stevens's success in improving productivity at United's provincial newspapers, largely though negotiating deals with the unions for direct input into computer typesetting equipment. It notes how he intends to get to grips with Fleet Street's over-manning and the delays in introducing modern methods.

That helps explain the curiously coded editorial in Rupert Murdoch's *Times*, welcoming the Commission's go-ahead for the bid. Noting the report's conclusion that the takeover was unlikely to operate against the public interest, *The Times* wondered: 'How could it possibly do so?'

Matthews might see those six words as a betrayal by Murdoch, whom he has regarded as a friend. But Murdoch has never let sentiment stand in the way of self-interest: and his main interest, where his British papers are concerned, is to break the deadlock with the unions that has delayed his plan to print the *Sun* and *News of the World* at an advanced new plant in London's Docklands.

With four national titles Murdoch is in a weak position to take on the unions over new technology: he is too vulnerable to threats of disruption. He needs a stalking horse. Matthews has never shown any serious inclination for a showdown with the printers on the issue and Maxwell, despite his latest set-to with the National Graphical Association, is scarcely a reliable ally. That is why Murdoch has welcomed Eddie Shah's proposed new national paper using modern techniques. If the unions are to be confronted, better someone else's money at risk than his own. And if Stevens is now going to join the battle too, so much the better.

The Murdoch group's attitude to Shah was defined by Andrew Neil, editor of the *Sunday Times*, at the Edinburgh TV Festival last week. He hoped the new proprietor would break up the cartel of publishers and unions that keeps production costs high. That consideration overrides any potential damage Shah's new paper might do to Murdoch's own titles. His executives do not expect it to make serious inroads into the group's circulation figures, but, even if it did, that would be a tolerable price for setting a precedent over new technology that could make Murdoch's operation more profitable in the long term.

As far as the *Express* papers themselves are concerned, a change of ownership ought to provide a needed editorial boost. The ABC figures for the first half of this year made depressing reading for Matthews. Of the three papers in his stable, only the *Star* showed any circulation gain over the same period last year — a creditable achievement when its main rivals, the *Mirror* and the *Sun*, registered losses. The *Daily Express* is slowly losing its slender lead over the *Mail*, which may have caught up by the end of the year. The *Sunday Express* treads water as it awaits the retirement of its veteran editor Sir John Junor: one of the longest fadeouts in the business.

Stevens is a financier with scarcely any public *persona*. There is nothing in his background to suggest that he will have any greater inkling of the real responsibilities of newspaper proprietorship than the other club members. Another opening, another show. □

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DIARY

Edinburgh

I've been chewing over a sharp clash with Colin MacCabe about Godard's latest movies. It started in the club room at Film House. Godard was due to come over for the Festival but couldn't get here. Seeing Colin I asked him whether he had really meant what he said in his recent introduction to the Channel 4 showing of Godard's *Passion*. The plot is this: it is a film about a Polish director making a film called (don't groan) 'Passion' who complains that his backers want their money back because it has no narrative. Meanwhile (don't yawn), he conducts a number of parallel affairs with women, who themselves become casually acquainted. The only reason I had not switched off was loyalty to the supreme film maker of the '60s and in case of some final redeeming moment. There wasn't one. Frightful, I thought. One of the finest cinematic achievements of our time countered MacCabe: he meant every word of praise and more; my failure to see this made me a 'philistine'. Unmoved by abuse I attacked Godard's egoism and especially his 'exploitation' of images of Rembrandt and painting in the film. Amid triumphant crowing, this brought down upon my head the accusation of being 'elitist'. Verity Lambert commented: 'It takes one to know one.' This did not reassure me, I only felt victory in my grasp when Colin wheeled out that ultimate English crush word, so full of pomposity yet devoid of substance. He declared that my refusal to acknowledge the unique standing of Godard's *Passion* meant that I was 'silly'.

○

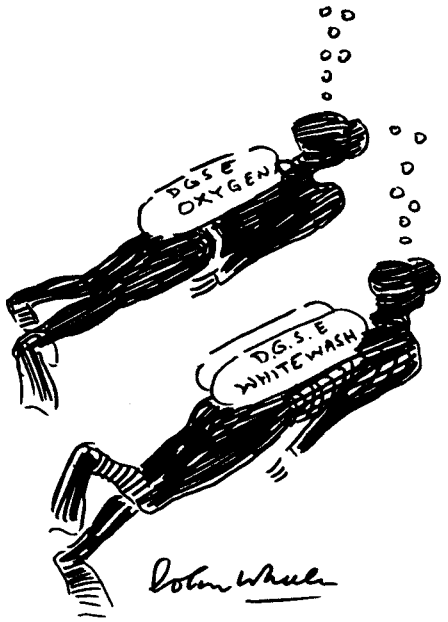
MacCabe has just been made head of the BFI's production board. It's an inspired appointment — a welcome rescue of a tremendously forceful talent from the endless seaweed of academe. If he works as hard as he talks, he will be as good as Pete Sainsbury, while he has already amplified the presence of the BFI as a public institution that gets films made. I only hope that he reconsiders his view of 'elitism'. Compared to Godard's *Passion*, Rembrandt's 'The Nightwatch' is like *ET* or the *Ghostbusters*, a smash hit that millions have been to see. And so our argument touched on two themes of the Festival: the popularity of culture, especially when subsidised, and walking out when you can bear it no longer.

○

John Clifford's *Losing Venice* was rightly praised by Angus Calder last week as one of the very best productions at the Festival: serious in intent and enjoyable in execution. So it's ironic that I should associate it with walking out. But I bumped, or rather squashed, into Teodor Shanin in the Traverse foyer. A Festival regular he reassured me that one of its pleasures is that it is *easy* to walk out of things when one goes to three shows a day. I'd already left a movie, *Seduction — the cruel woman*, due to the boredom rather than the bondage. But I still don't like to walk out during a live performance and so stayed on through one of the hits of the fringe, Lumiere & Son's *Brightside*, whose only redeeming aspect is the energy with which it packs so much that is so bad into 90 minutes. At the end, though, the audience is roundly abused for watching it at all. This struck me as unfair. Next time I'll know better.

○

The television festival convinced me that something is changing in the way cultural elitism affects us. Although the debate has been taking place in the columns of the *NS*, there is nothing like a live show to dramatise what is at stake. Is there an alternative to the polarisation between old style, patrician public service and Thatcherite commercialism? The articulate voice of deregulation comes from the Left — Peter Jay, David Graham — the latter a strict libertarian. In effect they are fronting for capital which hasn't the slightest interest in the consumer's equality of choice. A leader in this week's *Sunday Times*, undoubtedly composed by its editor Andrew Neil who spoke in Edinburgh, claimed that the issue is whether TV coverage will be decided by the government or the people. The profit motive is apparently



beside the point. But the death of the old elitism was really signalled by Jeremy Isaacs, the head of Channel 4. He said that public service broadcasting needed public support, which will come from the quality and impact of programmes. When I heard this it struck me as a truism and I nearly didn't bother to note it down. On reflection the notion is almost revolutionary. Historically the public service ethos may have needed public acquiescence but it also enjoyed plebian hostility. Its premise was that the public needed it more than it needed the public. Now Isaacs and, indeed, Tony Smith, the head of the BFI, are seeking what Phillip Whitehead calls 'a new ethic of public service broadcasting', open and innovative rather than socially pre-defined.

○

Socialists should support their efforts. Doubtless there will be plenty of cock-ups, but there will be lots of support as well. Here in Edinburgh, newly taken over by a Labour Council, the Festival itself has come under scrutiny (see Rob Edwards, *NS* 9 August). How can radicals break the stifling grip of the Edinburgh establishment while avoiding the destructive philistinism of traditional Labour prejudices? This is the municipal version of the TV debate. I talked with George Kerevan, one of the local councillors most involved. He argues that we need to propagate the idea of popular culture by seeking positive involvement. Labour has taken parts of the Festival out of the city centre, and popularised its attractions while preserving the Festival's international status. Attendances everywhere have risen, in galleries as well as theatres. It is still a matter of trial and error, he insists, of a dialogue with both audience and artists. As my own contribution to widening the appeal of the Festival I smuggled my eight-year-old daughter, who idolises Madonna, into the press screening of *Desperately Seeking Susan* — later she upstaged Barry Norman by telling him the plot. Now *that's* what I call elitism!

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

A laying on of hands

'Those that could not speak, I just laid my hand on. I wanted them to know I was there.' — Mrs Thatcher at the Manchester air crash

And She laid her hand on them that were
broken,
and spake, saying, 'Now are ye whole;
and them that were grievously hurt,
touched She them also, and spake thus:
Now are your wounds closed up.
And to them that could not speak,
said She in a terrible voice,
Know ye that I am here and am your Saviour,
that hath half an eye on your salvation,
and half on a good report of my greatness.

And they said, We are safe in thy hands,
for thou art mighty, and can perform
miracles;
and they that were beholden fell on their
knees,
and kissed the ground whereon She walked.

But there was one that worshipped her not,
and saw all things clearly as a child seeth,
and spake to her, saying:
Better to lay thy hand on thyself,
for thou art most sorely sick,
and in greatest need of treatment,
yea, even more than any of us.

And She that was beyond all help went away
from that place and wept.

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SENATE WOBBLES OVER LAW TO EXTRADITE IRISH

Terrorist or freedom fighter? The Administration will be the final arbiter if a new Anglo-US treaty goes ahead, reports MICHAEL FARRELL

Pacemaker Press

Joseph Doherty: one country's 'terrorist', another's 'freedom fighter'?

WHEN THE UNITED STATES Senate resumes next week one of the first controversial items that it considers will be a proposal to allow IRA fugitives sheltering in America to be handed over to Britain. The amendment to the Anglo-US extradition treaty was announced during the wave of hysteria over the Beirut hijacking and seemed sure of an easy passage, but is has run into unexpectedly stiff opposition.

Actual IRA supporters in the US, like Noraid, are noisy but don't carry political clout. The significant opposition to the treaty has come from within the establishment. Four senior Democratic Senators, one of them a personal friend of the late Lord Mountbatten, sharply criticised the amendment when it came before the Foreign Relations Committee last month. Away from Capitol Hill, bodies like the American Civil Liberties Union and the Filipino Human Rights Committee have joined Irish-American groups in opposing any change in the treaty which they fear could set a dangerous precedent.

To become law the amendment must be approved by the Foreign Relations Committee and ratified by a two-thirds majority in the full Senate. It is being strongly backed by President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher called for early ratification in her speech to the American Bar Association in London last month, but opponents think they have a good chance of blocking it either in committee or on the Senate floor.

The agreement to amend the treaty was signed by the two governments on 25 June, the same day that a judge in New York's Southern District Court dismissed out of hand the US government's second attempt to extradite convinced IRA member Joseph Doherty to Northern Ireland. The timing was probably coincidence but it was Doherty's case that led to the planned amendment. The wording would give the amendment retroactive effect so that Doherty could be extradited after all.

Doherty was the fourth IRA member in recent years to beat a British extradition warrant in US court. The first was Peter McMullen, an ex-British soldier who was sought in 1979 for allegedly bombing an army barracks in Yorkshire. Ironically McMullen has since turned against the IRA and was the source of much of the information in the recent *Sunday Times* story alleging that Sinn Fein MP Gerry Adams is the current chief of staff of the IRA.

The second IRA fugitve, Desmond Mackin, was sought in 1981 in connection with the wounding of an undercover soldier in West Belfast. The US court refused to extradite him but he was found to be an illegal immigrant and deported to Dublin. The third man, Liam Quinn, a US citizen, was wanted for allegedly killing a policeman in London and sending letter bombs. He won his court case in 1975 but has since been in jail in California awaiting the result of a government appeal.

Doherty was convicted of murdering an SAS captain in Belfast in 1980 but escaped from prison and fled to the US where he was arrested in 1983. Like the others, he pleaded that his offence was political and so exempt from extradition. Last December Judge John Sprizzo ruled that Doherty's case 'presents the assertion of the political offence exception in its most classic form' and refused to extradite him. Doherty remains in jail on deportation charges, but is at the same time pleading for political asylum.

ALL FOUR COURTS had ruled that there was a political conflict going on in Northern Ireland and that the IRA was not just a bunch of thugs and hoodlums but was carrying on a serious political struggle. The judgements were highly embarrassing to the Reagan Administration. A State Department spokesperson had told Doherty's trial that 'to deny extradition could cause damage in relations between Great Britain and the United States'. The damage might even 'extend to other countries with strong national policies against terrorism'.

As a result the amendment was drafted, providing that a whole series of offences involving violence would no longer be regarded as political for the purposes of extradition between the US and Britain. State Department spokesperson Abraham Sofaer laid heavy stress on the four IRA cases when he introduced the measure to the Foreign Relations Committee last month.

Noraid naturally opposed the measure but so did less militant groups like the Irish-American Unity Conference, the Irish National Caucus nad the Irish Brehon Law Society. Several of

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the Senators who attacked it are members of the anti-IRA, pro-Dublin government, Friends of Ireland group.

Extradition is a sensitive issue for Irish Americans. From Wolfe Tone in 1796 to recent times, America has given asylum to generations of Irish fugitives including Eamon de Valera in 1920 before he went on to become President. No one has ever been handed back to the British. Even the most moderate Irish Americans see extraditing fugitives as taking the British side in the Irish conflict.

There is also the question of due legal process. Trial by jury is fundamental to the American legal system. A number of Senators raised the question of the non-jury Diplock courts in Northern Ireland. Senator Joseph Biden from Delaware said: 'If we sign this treaty we will have to arrive at the conclusion . . . that the present judicial system in Northern Ireland is, in fact, one that is basically fair — a notion that I reject totally'.

What worries the civil rights lobby, the Filipinos and other non-Irish groups is that the amendment would set a precedent for similar agreements with other countries. Another State Department spokesman Stephen S. Trott told the National Law Journal that the Administration was negotiating along the same lines with a number of other 'friendly' governments. NATO countries and Japan have been suggested and officials have stressed that only 'democratic' countries would be considered.

But not everyone shares the Reagan Administration's definition of democracy. The civil rights organisers and the Filipinos fear that South Korea and the Philippines are also on the list. In fact the Administration proposed a similar treaty with the Philippines three years ago — when the Filipino opposition leader Benigno Aquino was still sheltering in the US before he was murdered — but the reaction was so hostile that it was withdrawn. Others suggest that the principle could be extended to El Salvador and Guatemala which have recently held elections of a sort.

Civil Rights spokesperson Susan Benda expressed the opposition's basic fear: 'This is a court-stripping exercise which would remove the decision on what constitutes a political offence from the courts to the Administration'. Or as Senator Claiborne Pell, who represented President Carter at Lord Mountbatten's funeral, put it: 'I think this whole question revolves around the business of one country's freedom fighters being another country's terrorists.'

Senator John Kerry, Edward Kennedy's junior partner in Massachusetts, took that a little further when he asked why the Administration was proposing such a treaty with Britain and not with Nicaragua. Senator Pell commented that the IRA were less of a terrorist threat in his view than the Contras in Nicaragua.

When the Senate resumes, the Foreign Relations Committee will hear evidence against the treaty. Several of the witnesses will concentrate on the legal system and the conduct of the security forces in Northern Ireland. Some Irish activists think the move to amend the treaty could backfire badly for the Administration and the British government. 'We have tried for years to get hearings on the Northern issue in the Senate', says Rev Sean MacManus, Fermanagh-born head of the Irish National Caucus, 'and we have always failed. Now they have handed it to us on a plate and we will make good use of it.' □

Michael Farrell's book Sheltering the Fugitive? *on the extradition of Irish political offenders will be published in September by Mercier Press, Dublin and Cork.*

MIDDLE EAST

REAGAN PEACE PLAN FLOPS

Arabs have made concessions, demanded by Washington, but Israel has not budged. SCOTT MACLEOD reports

WHAT HAS BECOME of the Reagan peace plan for the Middle East, launched with such noble purposefulness three years ago on 1 September? From the start it was one of the most ineptly charted diplomatic initiatives in years. The Reagan administration now seems anxious to drop the plan lest it cause further embarrassment — but it has no alternatives.

The final collapse of the plan may have been signalled by the failure of mid-August talks in Jordan, Israel and Egypt involving Richard W. Murphy, assistant US Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian afairs. On his six-day swing he was to have conducted a long-awaited meeting with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation as a warm-up to Arab peace talks with Israel. The meeting didn't come off because of strong Israeli government objections.

Jordan's King Hussein and Palestinian guerrilla leader Yasser Arafat have always been receptive to the Reagan plan. It didn't suit them perfectly, but they had no other options. Arafat especially had limited choices because of the destruction of his military bases during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982.

Arafat was displeased that the Reagan plan ruled out the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. He and Hussein were enthusiastic, however, about the provision that Israel should be compelled to end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In these territories, where 1.3 million Palestinians have lived under Israeli military occupatin for 18 years, Reagan promised to set up a Palestinian homeland within Hussein's realm.

Such an arrangement was made possible after Hussein and Arafat patched up old differences. The Palestine Liberation Organisation tried to overthrow the king in 1970. In the Amman Agreement of 11 February 1985, Arafat made some concessions to fall in line with Reagan's proposals. He dropped, at least for the time being, the PLO's demand for an independent state. To satisfy America's refusal to deal with the PLO, Arafat abandoned the PLO's demand that only PLO card-carriers could serve as negotiators where Palestinian interests were at stake.

Hussein and Arafat have persevered despite intensifying opposition from Syria and anti-Arafat factions based in Damascus. One of the PLO leader's close associates was assassinated by a hit squad presumably sent from the Syrian capital. Numerous Jordanian diplomats have been gunned down and the Jordanian airline has been bombed in attempts to destabilise Hussein's regime in Amman.

ISRAEL, ON THE OTHER HAND, has all along sought to derail the Reagan plan. The right-wing Likud bloc, formerly led by Menachem Begin and now headed by Yitzhak Shamir, rejected the American proposals on the morning after they were unveiled in uncompromising terms.

Likud opposes giving up an inch of the occupied territories. It feels this land is needed as a buffer against an Arab attack, and that the creation of a Palestinian homeland in the West Bank would pose an intolerable security threat. Perhaps most important of all, Likud believes that the West Bank represents part of Biblical Israel which the Jewish people are entitled to possess despite the wishes of its indigenous Arab inhabitants.

A more conciliatory position is taken by the Labour Party, whose leader, Shimon Peres, is presently the prime minister of the Labour-Likud coalition government in Jerusalem. Still, Labour insists on retaining large sectors of the occupied territories on security grounds. Labour, since its restoration to power in the autumn of 1984, has seemed hesitant to pursue peace talks because they may set off a deeper and more unpredictable polarisation of Israeli politics and society. Echoing the Likud line, Labour prefers to leave out the Palestinians and hold direct talks with Jordan.

While the Reagan administration has steadily pressured the Arabs to make concessions that would stimulate the peace process, little or no pressure has been applied to make the Israelis more accommodating. Reagan, for example, asked the Israeli government to impose a freeze on the construction of new colonies in the occupied territories. More than 40,000 Jewish settlers live in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights, the latter of which was taken from Syria in the 1967 Middle East War. Begin responded by announcing plans for yet further settlement and Peres has followed suit, albeit at a less ambitious pace than that set by his predecessor. At the heart of the problem is the absence in Israel of a consensus to grant the Palestinian people the right of self-determination and to give back the territories it captured at war with the Arabs.

The Reagan plan spoke of Palestinian rights and the need to end the Israeli occupation. But the Reagan administration has lacked the resolve and the resourcefulness to press Israel on these basic points.

Having alienated its Israeli allies for proposing the peace plan in the first place, and then angered the moderate Arabs for lacking the will to see it through, the Reagan initiative now looks even more of a fiasco in contrast wih the determined words with which it was launched. 'The United States will stand by these principles with total dedication,' Reagan said. 'In an age of nuclear challenge and economic interdependence, such conflicts are a threat to all the people of the world.' □

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LETTERS

Poor MPs

Simon Fowler, Richmond, Surrey

I was shocked to read about the MP for Richmond's (Jeremy Hanley) financial difficulties (*NS* 16 August). It makes one wonder how people on the average wage of £160 a week live, let alone the 7.2 million people living on supplementary benefit and another 4 million on or below the poverty line.

It is small wonder that Mr Hanley considers 'working outside the House is an economic necessity'. Of course finding work these days isn't so easy so I expect that Mr Hanley follows the stern Victorian values laid down by Mrs Thatcher. Mrs Hanley, no doubt, takes in washing, the children sweep chimneys in the holidays and Mr Hanley himself, perhaps moonlighting from some debate, does decorating or washes dishes. Some fund should be set up (Member aid ?) so that MPs should not suffer financial hardship.

Letter to the Bishop

We regret that owing to a transmission error the phrase 'in France' crept into line 12, column 3, of James Baldwin's article on the South African situation — his open letter to Bishop Tutu — in *NS* 23 August. The relevant passage should have read '. . .Yet, you must have sometimes been struck, as I have been, by the vehemence of the Western leaders (my own nominal representative *en tête*) concerning global freedom and democracy. . .' We apologise to James Baldwin for any embarrassment this may inadvertently have caused. We were proud to print his views.

A step forward?

Judith Cook, Newlyn, Penzance

The leaflet to GPs mentioned in last week's *NS* is in fact only the tip of a more interesting iceberg. It is the public part of a package of documents currently being circulated. The main one of these is a ten-page circular to Regional Health Authorities on the same subject (Ref. HC(85)4.

This details the responsibilities of the emergency services: fire brigades, police, water authorities, local health workers, hospitals, etc. Details are given on the proposed setting up of Operational Support Centres (OSCs) and of how to allay public fears. It spells out, of course, that any kind of nuclear accident is remote and it also says that a major accident from nuclear waste is not possible — in view of the accident of that kind in the Soviet Union in 1957 at Chelyabinsk this seems optimistic. However, it does not talk about the possible need to evacuate people and monitor radioactivity up to 40 kilometres from an accident compared with the notion put forward at Sizewell that evacuating people from Sizewell itself to Leiston (four miles or less away) was quite sufficient. While there is much wrong with it, it is a step forward in government thinking and one wonders why it should be issued just now.

Sacrificing children to 'trends'

F. Wood, Marcham, Abingdon, Oxon

If your well intentioned comments on 'Cruelty to children' (*NS* 9 August) are confused, they do but share a general confusion that are the attributes of 'Social Work' under Social Service Departments, existing legislation and training.

The era of good child care commenced with the setting up of Children's Departments in 1948 and terminated with the take-over by Social Services in 1971. Since then there has been a steady decline in actual child care but a lot of noise about 'Children's Rights'. Unfortunately we live in the age of 'trends' to which well founded and sound theories have been sacrificed and the children have become the tools of such trends and dubious political philosophies.

There is a widespread reluctance to accept that conflict between a child and his/her family can often only be remedied by removal of the child on a permanent basis. Where a child is removed, he can be left in limbo in a children's home for a number of years so as not to deprive the parents of their 'rights', whilst naive attempts are made to rehabilitate them. In a recent case in a juvenile court, where care proceedings had been brought because of ill treatment, the child was returned home, the magistrates telling the parents, 'We are going to take the risk'. It was of course the child who was taking the risk.

The grounds for bringing care proceedings were changed by the 1969 Act. It is now necessary to prove that the damage has been done before action can be taken and the public and the media criticize social workers for failing to exercise powers that they do not possess. If you refuse to let me in when I ask to see your child I have to obtain a magistrate's warrant on the grounds that the damage has been done, not that it is likely to be done.

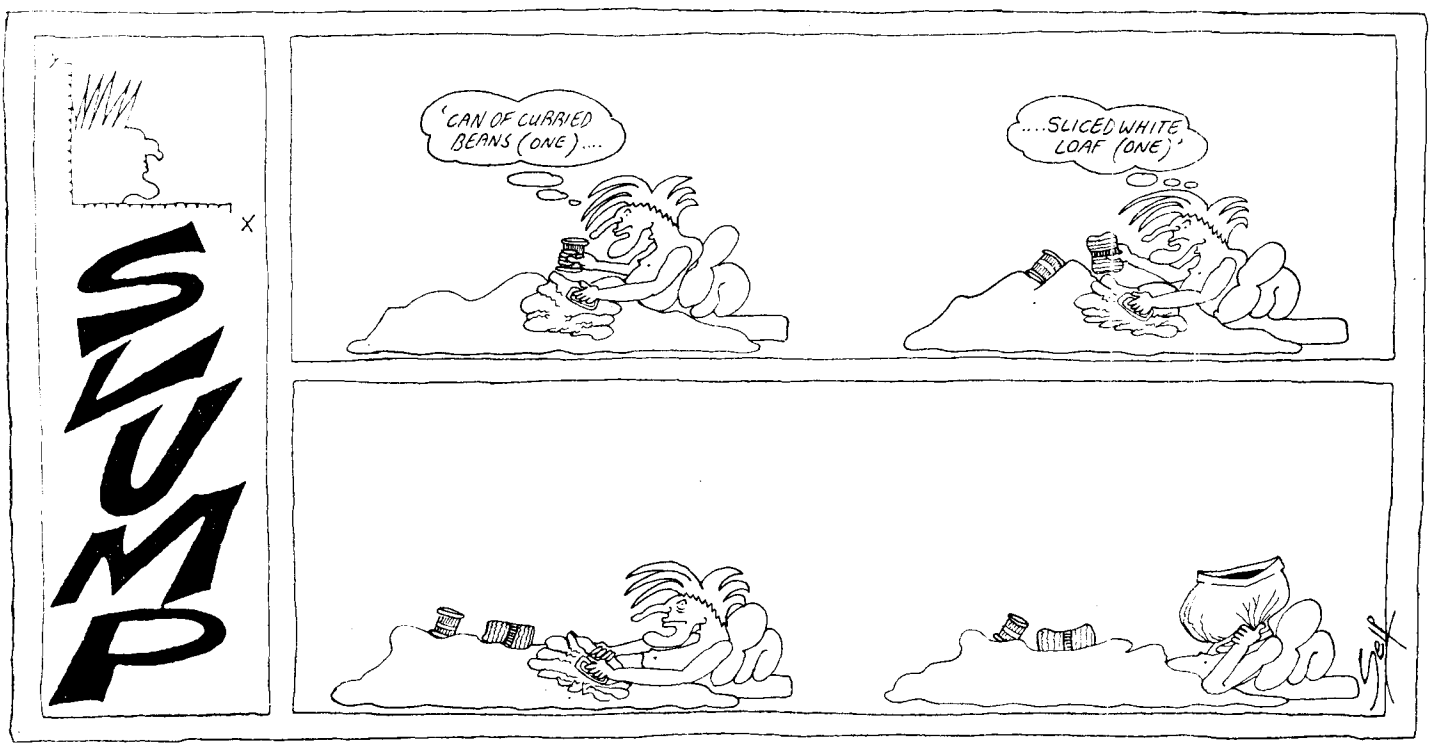
Certainly the whole subject of child care, legislation and practice needs very careful review. It needs another 'Curtis Committee' which would hopefully recommend the revival of Children's Departments after looking at the way the present system is not working.

Coventry vs Liverpool

Phil Street, Community Education Development Centre, Coventry

I enjoyed reading Barry Hugill's 'Nothing special about these schools' (*NS* 16 August) but I was rather disappointed by the penultimate paragraph. There Hugill almost makes the claim that Liverpool has discovered community schools. Liverpool's policy innovation is welcome and Hugill's recognition of the importance of community schooling is commendable, nevertheless community schooling has been growing throughout the UK over the past decade.

Further information on community education and community schools is available from: CEDC, Briton Road, Coventry, CV2 4LF. We have been promoting community schooling since 1980.



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Fiona Wyllie

Too Late Not to Know

Short story by Aileen La Tourette

I'M ALWAYS SURPRISED more babies aren't eaten. People go on about buns in the oven and their mum's recipe for placental pud. *The Elizabeth David Book of Cannibal cookery* would have a juicy chapter or two on newborn babies. Best not overdone, I'd have thought.

My nurses could do with a nice round meal, failing a square one, as they so often do. Swift's modest proposal for the poor would suit us to a T bone fresh from the incubator, just the right size. We are the poor, the ones we bloody have always with us, thank you very much.

They'd say I was frustrated and they'd be right, whoever they are. I know it now. Didn't before. Used to think it was the usual things. Too many casualties — always thought that was a funny word, especially when it meant tragedies — tiredness, bad food, sore feet, the smile that feels like someone's got a fish-hook in your mouth. Then I went along with a couple of young nurses to a disco, and I realised.

They asked me along even after I'd made them take their Gay Pride badges off. I told them to think of something subtler, and they did. They tucked pink triangles into their hair, on grips or barrettes. Cheeky. Not strictly kosher, but then, neither am I, when you come to it. I wore a pink hankie tucked triangular in my pocket on the last day. I thought it was quite a nice touch, though my heart beat so fast when I got in that morning I thought I was going deaf.

I only got one funny look, from the consultant when she came by on her rounds. She cleared her throat, but she never said a word. Blushed strawberry. The things that woman sees every day of the week, without changing colour! She left after the briefest word, without a cup of tea. I turned around as she walked away, more like jogged away down the corridor, and there was one of the pink triangular nurses smiling ironically. Later, she came up to me. This time I'm afraid I blushed, which is at least as out of character for me as it is for the consultant.

'Sister,' she said firmly. 'We were wondering, Sue and I —'

'Yes.' I hoped I'd be able to hear what they were wondering. My heart was pounding again.

'We're going to a disco tonight with some other women. Would you like to come?'

'Yes,' I grinned, and gave my hankie a devil-may-care twirl like a moustache. 'I'd love to come.'

As she gave me the details I began to shake inside. Disco? Other women? Did that mean dance? Could I still — what did I mean, 'still'?

I dressed as carefully as I could, then tore it all off and dressed as carelessly as I could. That was nearer the mark but still, in the words of my favourite writer, Françoise Sagan, the results were praiseworthy rather than brilliant. I don't mean she writes my favourite books exactly, though I love those sloe-eyed existential French ruffians, but she's definitely my favourite writer. I guess it's her I fancy, rather than her books.

Such were my nervous thoughts while getting dressed. Made me feel like a senile teenager, coming across that little fact in my psyche. I had a few to get me going, then there they were without their uniforms and off we set. The place was nearby, so near and yet so far — I walked in with them, and blinked.

Our places were always scruffy and sad. This was a little jewel. Our old, dusty rooms above pubs always made me think of the apostles in their upper room, huddled round when Jesus appeared after the Resurrection. Scared to death to poke their noses out, they were, never guessing something scarier would show up right there. Just like us, so scared of the outside world, never guessing the inside world was much scarier, till we got there. If we did.

I'm religious, after a fashion. I was asked that question that very night, as we sat down with our drinks, all squashed sisterly in a booth. A gold cross dangled down me cleavage and they wanted to know why.

'I don't know what I really believe,' I told them. 'But the stories pop up at the oddest moments, seem to follow me like. I seem to see different things in them as I get older. And I do like a hymn on a Sunday. If I was a Buddhist, I expect I'd think of their stories and fancy a bit of a chant now and then.'

They started arguing about sleeping in on a Sunday, then Sue, who's a quiet little thing, spoke up. I worry about Sue sometimes. 'Does it help,' she asked, and

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took a swallow of her drink. 'On the ward?'

'Oh, yes, it helps,' I told her.

We were quiet for a moment. I was praying. If there isn't such a thing, then I was doing something there's no name for. I was thinking of the suffering, not thinking of it justified or transformed or anything like that. I hate it with a passion, the suffering I see. It makes me shake with rage inside. I don't think the crucifixion was much, either, compared with some of the labours I've seen. Three hours? *They* go on for days. Days, and nights. Sometimes I stick the corners of the cross into my palm to keep from going crazy, or numb. Once or twice I've drawn blood, much to my disgust. I have no time for martyrs or stigmata. But I get some sort of balance from it, the cross I mean. Something about the angles of it.

We didn't just sit and drink and talk religion at this do. We danced. I hadn't danced in so long...never like that. I wasn't even obeying the music. It was obeying me. Obedience is such an old-fashioned word. The music was mine, that's all. And then just when I was high as a kite I fell from my great height, into a slough of despond. Or rather, as I slunk back to the table after my hour of glory — I had been dancing for a solid hour — I realised I'd been down for a long, long time. I hadn't even noticed, till then.

And I knew why. It was as if all that hiding and waiting and praying was useless. Hiding from the outside world, in the inside world, or vice versa, or hiding from both, in limbo. Waiting for money and waiting for love. You'd be amazed how much you think about money when you haven't got it. Every time you buy a present, it's a Long March to find something you can afford. Every time you cook someone a meal, you need a fortnight to start cooking the meat into something chewable, let alone digestible. It's so time-consuming to be poor. And it makes you sore and small inside to trudge round eyeing things you'll never be able to afford. I'm really surprised nurses don't steal. I've often thought about it, but never... conscience and cowards and all that.

Which brings me back to my moment of truth, about being down. Waiting all my grown life for a climate where love could live. And here it was, and I'd missed it. I'd been out in the cold without noticing the temperature'd shot up. And the praying for other people's pain, what was that but putting a space between you and it, so you could function? Until you only functioned in the space between you and other people.

I could've done without knowing how sad I was. Who needs to know these things? But it was too late not to know. The tears dribbled down, and they asked me what was wrong, the two from my ward. The rest had cleared off. You can't bluff a good nurse, so I told them. I told them how I'd hidden and hoped and then somehow forgotten the hope and just hidden. They listened. They reminded me of my pink hankie, which I took out to blow my nose.

When I got home that night, that next morning, I did a strange thing. Something else I hadn't planned to do, which was strange in itself. I took off my cross. Not because anything I believed or didn't believe had changed at the disco, no sudden reverse-conversion, though it happens. There are plenty of atheistic visions and voices and roads to Damascus.

But this was a religious act. I'd begun to use it as a crutch. I wanted to throw away my crutch and manage without it, take up my bed and walk, even dance, that sort of thing. I didn't feel like a cripple any more. I could find my own balance.

I wonder if anyone would understand, that it was a religious act, that the absence of it is something I need? Oh well, people can't be understanding people all the time.

Then I did something else. No, no knight errantess with a charge card swept me off to the Hilton for a weekend. I do so love those Hawaiian cocktails. But I shall keep an eye out for someone to love, with or without American Express. Meanwhile, I loved myself. Literally, of course. Can't think why I ever left off. □

Oranges and *The Times*

Short story by Adrianne Blue

SHE LOOKED LIKE a beautiful boy. People would say to her, you look like a beautiful boy except for the bosom, and I would say, no, she does not. But she did. She had an incredibly lovely androgynous body: broad shoulders, slim hips, no bum, but breasts that made me wish to be a man and have a right to them, or to be willing to glare my churchy mother in the eye and say, yes, I nuzzled them, yes, I tasted them, yes, I buried my head in them and was comforted.

There were always stories about her. And smirks. There were smirks when Ian Thorburne brought her over from America and got her hoisted onto his arts page as a researcher. She had been working off and on as a singer in a jazz club in Greenwich Village, and she had a job at another club in the same street taking tickets, and she did bits and pieces, working as a paid escort. That sort of thing. Rather rough work. Does that make her rough trade? Her name was Marian like Robin Hood's maid.

There were smirks because Ian had married her. The outright chuckles came a year or so later when she got her first by-line. What she wrote wasn't half bad. By the time I met her, Ian was being dried out for the third or fourth time, and Marian was holding onto the arts page for him. A year later, he lost his grip entirely and she, with an unexpected sense of seemliness — or was it honour? — said no to his job and moved over to the evening paper I worked on. She was having an affair with a post-punk musician, a boy with a Mohawk haircut who lived in a squat in Caledonian Road. Ian Thorburne got a divorce. Uncontested.

In the corridor at the paper, she would stop short when she saw me, barring my high-heeled path. I'd suck in my breath when she touched my often bare forearm, tossed her tawny head flirtatiously and begged me to tell her where she might find Hershey bars or popovers or frozen tortillas. She had got it into her head that I did the column on food. Monterey jack cheese, New York cheddar, Californian zinfandel, she thought I had cellars full. I did give her a cutting from a health magazine, an address in Reigate where she could send for the high fibre oaten biscuits she wanted so badly.

Then she asked me to go with her to hear The Untouchables at Dingwall's. I was surprised, and I wasn't keen. I don't care much for pubs either. All that smoke. She threw in dinner at Joe Allen's. She liked big whiskys and black-eyed beans. She talked about Ornette Coleman and Boy George and Bob Marley. I hadn't known he was dead. And the body beautiful. She had been born exquisite: she was weight training arduously.

It was much too late when we finished eating to get the underground home. Not many taxis about either. We pretended there weren't any. We walked to her flat in New Row and she put me to bed beside her. I fell asleep immediately.

In the middle of the night I woke to feel her tossing in her sleep: her breathing was deep, utterly regular, but her arm, flailing like a whale below its depth, beached on my breast. I didn't move. She was asleep, innocent. So, until then, was I.

There were, as I say, always stories about Marian. Everyone who saw her wanted to fuck her, she had a luminous sexuality, and Marian, it was said, would do it with just about anyone gorgeous. Black musicians, the waiters at L'Escargot, a screenwriter who had almost won a Grammy, his

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Fiona Wyllie

Egyptian wife.

I wondered why she wanted to do it with me. I'm not beautiful. I'm a tall, tense, mahogany-haired woman who carries more blubber than she should. Not many people want to do it with me. Not many of those seem to have liked it awfully. My first lover got worried when my hips began undulating unduly. He said, considerately, 'Let me do the work.' My second lover didn't wash enough. I realised I don't like the way men smell. My third, I was 27 by then, was very clean but he was an obsessive cook. I have a terror of food. I gave him up.

I was, I suppose, quite ready for a fourth lover, despite my mother's three and a half words of wisdom when I hit puberty: 'Sex is over-rated.' I could see her point, but it has its points too. I like it better than television.

'Have you ever slept with a woman?' Marian said in the morning while she was making the scrambled eggs. She stirred the eggs intently, but very slowly, peering deeply into the red saucepan, stirring, stirring. I didn't answer. If one of us didn't say something soon, the eggs would be the consistency of cement.

'I have,' I said, 'nothing against it. It just hasn't come up.'

'It has now.' She plopped some egg on top of the piece of toast that was lying on my plate.

'Have you?' I said for something to say.

'I'm having an affair with Lydia.'

'The model. She's beautiful.'

'Umm.' She was chewing egg and toast.

'Then why do you need me?'

'I don't need you particularly. I want you.'

So this is how it happens, I was thinking. Decadence. Over breakfast. 'It might not be much fun. Not if you're in love with Lydia.'

'You won't know unless you try.'

'Are you in love with Lydia?'

She gave a little laugh.

'You're supposed to get me drunk,' I said. 'Seduce me. I'm a virgin so to speak. You're supposed to slide me into it, gently.'

She laughed a nicer laugh and cut herself another slice of bread. 'More toast?'

I nodded. She put two slices under the grill.

'I don't want you to do anything you don't want to do. That's why I'm asking you in the morning. Think about it. If you want to, come for dinner tonight. If you don't want to, come anyway.'

'At least you could say you're in love with me,' I said.

The table that night was laid for four. Black linen napkins shrouded each plate. 'My ex-husband and his girl friend,' Marian said, biting a cuticle. 'They'll be a little late.'

They were a lot late. Ian Thorburne's girl friend was — have you guessed? — the model Lydia. She was as long-limbed as a greyhound and rather less intelligent. I allowed Marian to pour me a tumbler of whisky. Ian and Lydia drank Perrier laced with slices of lime. Marian was guzzling orange juice which she loaded up with something alcoholic in the kitchen. I feared we were going to have an excess of truth.

Ian frequently kneaded Lydia's arm. She looked vacantly into his eyes. Marian looked into Lydia's. I kept mine lowered to my plate on which slices of avocado were bedded down with tomato covered to the chin with mozzarella.

Cheese gives me migraine. I picked around it.

I was feeling dicey anyway.

The talk was of the magazine covers Lydia was soon to be on. Ian was considering going on holiday to Outer Mongolia, or maybe making a telly programme there. With champagne and such banished from his diet, the fourth channel was about to become his oyster. Marian said that my food column had inspired the meal. I said, oh no, oh no. She wouldn't hear of my demurrers.

When Ian Thorburne and Lydia left, Ian kissed each of us on the cheek. Lydia fingered my neck and kissed Marian on the lips. It was barely eleven p.m.

'That wasn't so easy,' Marian said when she shut the door. She was plainly miserable. She had given Ian Thorburne what she must have considered his due. We went to bed. Hardly propitious circumstances, but I felt it the least I could do.

Unexpectedly, making love with her was bliss. It was a matter of complementarity, reciprocity, rather than input-output. It wasn't any work at all.

In the morning, after we had done it again, I said, 'The psychology is crazy. You're in love with her.'

'I'm beginning to wonder.'

'I'm going to be hurt. I'm going to...'

'Don't jump to such sad conclusions.'

I got out of bed and started putting on my bra. 'Is it better with her than with me?'

'You don't have much practice yet.'

That stung.

'But you'll get more practice,' she said. 'Anyway, you're okay.'

I stepped into my skirt and went into the lavatory to brush my teeth.

'Use mine,' she shouted, 'the green one. I'll buy you one tomorrow.'

I never asked her whose the others were.

After about eight months, we ran out of things to talk about, and somehow that made the love-making, the sex, less interesting. People I tell this to snicker. What does one thing have to do with the other? they say. Maybe I've been telling the wrong people.

I stopped going round to Marian's.

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Occasionally, we would have a drink at The Lamb and Flag or somewhere near the paper. Since the affair had not ended because we had rowed, but because we had run out of things to say, being 'just friends' was highly unsatisfactory. There seemed to be no alternative.

She went to America on holiday and came back with mega-vitamins and jojoba-based hand creams and large, translucent jars of calcium-cum-magnesium tablets.

'Come to dinner,' she said, 'and I'll give you a month's supply.' I raised an eyebrow. 'Of calcium. A gift of friendship.'

While I was chewing tofu and spinach salad, I began to cry. Perhaps because I knew she would caress me. 'Why are you crying?' She was stroking the soft place beneath my ear. 'You were as bored with it as I was.'

'For,' I said brokenly, shivering with sobs, 'the lost sweetness.' I was chilled to the heart. 'Not,' I said hastily, lest she be offended, 'for my lost sweetness. For the lost sweetness of you.'

I met a man at the opening of an exhibition at the Commonwealth Institute. He had a wife in Geneva and a daughter in boarding school in Lausanne. I was somewhere between their ages. He was fond of the commodities market, mediaeval manuscripts, and me. He had done classics. He knew Greek as well as Latin. I was fond of him. Not fond enough. Eventually it made me too sad. Then there was the photographer who went to the Yucatan on an extended assignment. Then one of my mother's childhood friends offered me her son. I realised I wasn't interested even in having a look at him.

My friend Jennifer gave a dinner party. There was a woman seated across the table. Her name was Ruth like Naomi's daughter-in-law. Immediately, I liked the way she dissected a movie and touched her cheek when she had made a point. Later, I liked the way she peeled an orange and folded *The Times* and unfolded her arms when I appeared in her doorway so she could quickly put them around me.

She says I have my points too, as well as faults. But that is another story. As for this one, I don't care who knows it either, so long as it isn't my fifth form teacher or my mother. □

Among this week's contributors:

Aileen La Tourette's most recent novel was *Nuns and Mothers* (Virago). Her earlier stories have been published, with Sara Maitland's, in *Weddings and Funerals* (Brilliance).

Adrianne Blue's short stories have appeared in *Transatlantic Review, The Village Voice* and *literary quarterlies.*

Terry Tastard is a friar and university teacher. He has worked as a journalist in South Africa.

Twilight time for the Cape

Terry Tastard

Camera Press

Waiting: The Whites of South Africa
VINCENT CRAPANZANO *Granada* £10.95
The Randlords: The Men who Made South Africa
GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT *Weidenfeld* £12.95

HEARING THE VOICES in **Waiting** is rather like watching a horror movie, with the grisly addition that this time you can't just tell yourself it's not for real. It is. Crapanzano is a US anthropologist who has lived with and observed white South Africans in a small town he calls Wyndal in the Western Cape. It is the recorded ramblings of these whites — particularly the hard-core racism of the Afrikaners — that strikes such a chill into the heart.

By letting them speak for themselves, Crapanzano gets us inside their skins and conveys superbly the peculiar, perhaps pathological kink in Afrikaners' thinking whereby they genuinely think of themselves as the persecuted victims of a hypocritical world out to oppress them. He also captures the stultifying narrowness of white South African thinking and the uneasy ambivalence of English-speakers who benefit lushly from a political system which many of them claim to dislike.

Early in the book he puts forward an idea that may help explain white South Africa's cultural barrenness, saying that its consciousness is characterised by waiting; the future thus awaited is not an expansive one but 'a constricted one that closes in on the present', draining it of meaning and vitality. He says little about this idea subsequently, leaving us to observe it at work as people speak. True enough they do at times seem mesmerised by a future *Götterdämmerung* that they can neither avert nor avoid.

Unfortunately not all Crapanzano's anthropological analyses are as helpful. Sometimes he can be unctuous, as with the reference to anthropology as the 'science of otherness' with 'not only an intellectual mission but a moral one as well'. And his treatment of the crucial topic of South Africa's institutionalised violence manages to be both trivialising and obscure ('... the stories and tales of violence are a kind of rehearsal for stories and tales of the future, which may have to be lived as well as told. They give cover to the terrifying silence of the pure act'). There are also a few lapses, notably a horrible misspelling of Breyten Breytenbach's name and references to lay priests instead of lay ministers.

However, Crapanzano skilfully interweaves the first-person stories with social and historical background information about South Africa as a whole. Another bonus is the way he makes us aware of the darker side of religion in South Africa — the church's good track record with Desmond Tutu and Trevor Huddleston is not the whole story. Here we are shown how the Dutch Reformed Church helps forge Afrikaans social conformity, while elsewhere the charismatic movement induces an introverted passivity in the face of apartheid.

This telling of a national tragedy through the lives of ordinary people gives its depiction of racism an extra cutting edge. It is an anglicised Afrikaner who, speaking of his fellow Afrikaners and the Great Trek, delivers what could well be a suitable future epitaph for white South Africa: 'They became stubborn; they cling to their culture... They refuse to admit

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that it is inadequate to the world they are living in.'

By contrast, the mining entrepreneurs in **The Randlords** are characterised by unscrupulousness rather than stubbornness. In describing these men (sic) who made South Africa, Geoffrey Wheatcroft writes with flair. Yet it is an historical smorgasbord rather than a full meal: I put the book down feeling something was missing.

The problem is not the subject matter, which is fascinating. It chronicles the scramble for gold and diamonds in South Africa at a time, the late 19th-century, when towns sprang up on bare veld almost overnight and a Hertfordshire vicar's son (Cecil Rhodes) or an East End publican's family (the Barnatos) could make mega-fortunes. Within four years of the discovery of gold in 1885 scrubby farmland had become Johannesburg, with a theatre, phones and a booming stock exchange.

The problem with this book lies elsewhere. It is to be found in the shadowy presence of thousands of black workers toiling dangerously and for a pittance. In 1879 the black death rate on the diamond mines was 79 per thousand, twice that of whites. Those same blacks were locked up naked in compounds and purged with laxatives to make sure they were not stealing diamonds. They were allowed the consolations of religion: missionaries were allowed to visit them and, in the words of an engineer, were 'enjoined to press upon the native mind two simple precepts — the virtue of obedience and the dignity of labour'. Where Wheatcroft gives us information like this we glimpse a demi-monde on which the mining magnates depended. The men who made South Africa were below the ground, not above it. Historians of South Africa marginalise black people by focussing on the archives. Precious oral history is slipping away and needs to be incorporated into our historical consciousness.

However, *The Randlords* is not without its political implications. It reminds us of the enormous wealth that flowed from South Africa into Britain. The mining magnates became the respectable nabobs of London, with baronetcies, houses in Park Lane and art collections. Those wearisome people who complain that we pay more attention to South Africa's iniquities than to the Soviet Union's forget that people from Britain had a crucial role in making South Africa what it is today and that wealth from South Africa shaped Britain. We are locked into a situation of inescapable responsibility. Apartheid's roots extend deep into Britain. □

One man's meat

Justin Wintle

The Penguin Companion to the Arts in the Twentieth Century
KENNETH McLEISH *Viking* £16.95

SOMEONE DOWN the King's Road must have handed round a forgotten stash of LSD when Penguin-Viking decided to go ahead with this one. Before Kenneth McLeish's *Companion to the Arts in the Twentieth Century* thudded on to my desk I honestly believed there were but three kinds of reference book: the Good, the Bad and the Indifferent. Now I realise there is a fourth category: the Pretentiously Flatulent.

The bulk of McLeish's book is made up of short biographical-type entries arranged alphabetically in six different sections, covering architecture, literature, cinema, music, painting & sculpture and the theatre. Each of these is accompanied by a fatuously brief list of 'key dates' and a summary of the art in question. There is also a token glossary of 'technical' terms (Method Acting, for example, or Expressionism, but not Structuralism) and a 50-page index which is unequivocally the best thing about an otherwise indigestibly jejune production.

The root of the awfulness is that McLeish has written the whole thing himself in a style that hovers uneasily between fashion journalism and. . .well, fashion journalism. 'Standing back and taking stock of a century's artistic achievement is an activity as daunting as it is presumptuous,' he declares in his preface. But the trouble is McLeish doesn't know how to stand back. Each of his appreciations is like something out of *Just A Minute* — except that some of them must have taken at least three minutes to compose.

To experience the full force of McLeish's effort the *Companion* should be read for several minutes on end, for the banalities are brutally cumulative. Here are just a few of his *obiter dicta*: on Le Corbusier: 'the Moses of the International Style'; on Borges: 'a riddling writer, and a bit of a riddle'; on E. E. Cummings: 'A suitable (lower) case for treatment?'; on Aldous Huxley: 'he is a pamphleteer who squats in rather than inhabits the novel form'; on Wodehouse: 'if Wodehouse's mine was shallow, the lode was rich'; on Firbank: 'I chatter, therefore I am.' But, try as he may, McLeish fails to come up with a single morsel that might disturb the appetite of the most famished quotations dictionary editor, and nearly every one of his squibs rebounds upon himself.

McLeish is just as un-at-home with the other arts as he is with architecture and literature. Ingmar Bergman's genius, he tells us, 'is not visual, but literary'. Fellini's 'trite themes. . .have a resonance not often met with when movie-makers start picking over their own navel-fluff.' A Canadian director called Allan Dwan is singled out as one of the unsung co-evals of the likes of Griffith and De Mille 'whose only pretension ws to entertain', though McLeish admits, 'He is hardly Tolstoy.' He rattles through the Hollywood Greats like Dilys Powell on a bad Sunday, and is similarly out of key when he approaches his chosen composers. Tippett, he says, is a 'flawed genius', while Kurt Weil 'was less a magnificent failure than a dull success'. And so on through painting and sculpture. Thus Dali's work 'seems designed for reproduction on the tea-towels of yesterday's smart art set', Warhol represents 'the last, limp flourish of a long tradition of negativism in 20th-century art', and

'Unemployment, no one can doubt, is the social scourge of our time. Here, standing against the elegant rationalizations of numerous scholars and the repellent rhetoric of all conservative politicians, is the informed common sense of Shirley Williams. No one should miss it'

– J. K. Galbraith

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS

A JOB TO LIVE

A hard-hitting analysis of unemployment and the impact of the new technologies on all our lives.

Penguin £2.95

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Allen Jones (nice to see him) evokes 'Clockwork orange juice, anyone?'.

At least, though, the reviewer is spared the customary labour of taking out the weighing pans and assessing the book's merits on a who's-in who's-out basis. McLeish's selection is neither here nor there. There are a few bright new faces I haven't seen referenced before, the novelist David Cook, for instance, and the American black-power playwright Ed Bullins, but I can't imagine they'll be flattered by their debut. At first I thought that perhaps McLeish's intention was to provide a sort of anti-dictionary, a spatter-gun debunking of all our idols combined with a demonstrative put-down of conventional encyclopaedic gravity. But in reality it turns out that his judgments are all cut from a cloth in which the garrulous and the tasteless are woven together in a pattern of intricate inconsistency.

To give just one but rather pertinent example I offer McLeish on Frederick Raphael (who is also given a rather fulsome acknowledgement in the preface for services rendered). Raphael, McLeish urges, is 'one of the most talented novelists of his generation, a man — like Burgess, whom in every other respect he outclasses — never content to write the same book twice.' While the obvious implication here is that Raphael may be content to write the same book three times, the entry on Burgess does concede that Burgess too is rather impressive, even the Victor Hugo *de ses jours*. Perhaps the point of this is to give his buddy a second leg up, but if I were Raphael I'd be muttering, 'With friends like that. . ..'

The Burgess entry also points to the real failure of McLeish's Companion. 'For determined postulants' McLeish warmly recommends Burgess's *A Shorter Finnegans Wake*, 'which cuts the book in half'. For the compiler, the quickest route is obviously in all cases the best and this is reflected in all the entries themselves. Next to no biographical information is provided and any genuine critical discussion is deliberately shunned. The relations between criticism and creativity in our century, between theory and practice, have been vastly more complex, and vastly more productive, than the author seems able to comprehend. Full of throwaway lines, his *Companion* is a throwaway book. □

Youth

Brendan Cleary

This youth on my train
came up from the embankment
with lighter fuel fumes
in his eyes

Such a crazy vision
of the pylons
dwindling away.

FICTION

Foreign ways

Sheila MacLeod

The Trick of the Ga Bolga
PATRICK McGINLEY *Cape* £9.50
North Gladiola
JAMES WILCOX *Alison Press/Secker* £9.50
Running Backwards Over Sand
STEPHANIE DOWRICK *Viking* £9.95
The Garish Day
RACHEL BILLINGTON *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter
MARY ROSE CALLAGHAN *Marion Boyars* £9.95

IF PATRICK McGINLEY had set out to write an anti-tourist tract, hoping to keep us Brits out of Ireland forever, he could hardly have succeeded better than with **The Trick of the Ga Bolga**. The small, isolated Donegal community of Garaross is not one that any outsider would lightly decide to settle in. But in 1943 or so the Englishman George Coote, a gritty loner disinclined to fight in the war, comes more or less innocently to such a decision. And with fatal results.

Coote finds himself in an emotionally claustrophobic environment where everyone knows everyone else's business and is keen to bring him up to date with their own version of native events and characters. The priest and the Protestant schoolmaster vie for his religious allegiance. His two closest neighbours, Salmo and the Proker ('Everyone has at least one nick-name') exist in a state of potentially lethal enmity. And as far as women are concerned, his favours must be divided between the handsome, sexy Imelda, a war grass-widow, and the schoolmaster's virginal daughter, Consolata. The more Coote tries to remain distanced and uninvolved, the more he becomes enmeshed with all his neighbours.

To an outsider, eccentricity is the hallmark of Garaross. But it is an eccentricity which has a logic of its own, being rooted in Ireland's ever-present past and a peculiar mix of Celtic myth and Catholicism, where nothing is ever quite what it seems. Coote assumes the trick of the Ga Bolga to be some esoteric sexual manoeuvre but discovers too late that it is in fact a combative sleight-of-hand. Amid the general boozing and hilarity, other illusions are similarly shattered.

Patrick McGinley seems to be telling us that it is impossible to remain uninvolved, whether with national struggles or with our fellow-creatures. Not only the forces of history but the all-too-human existence of other people obviate the sort of lone neutrality which poses as amoral but is in fact a form of immorality. This is a strange, elusive novel which sometimes verges on the blarney, but is never less than excellently written and, once read, remains a powerfully haunting presence.

An outsider would find a more orthodox, if slightly distracted welcome in **North Gladiola**, Louisiana. No less eccentric than the inhabitants of Garaross, the natives are a cosmopolitan bunch with hybrid names like Ethyl Mae Coco and Bruce LaSteele. All human (American, whether by birth or adoption) life is there and James Wilcox, a latter-day Woody Allen of the South, has a bizarre tale to relate.

Ethyl Mae, who runs the unaccomplished Pro Arts quartet, is 57 and the Catholic mother of six. She is, we are given to understand, a tyrant, fast in her faith and, according to her own daughter, 'a red-neck from Mississippi'. The novel follows her gradual exposure as rotten wife, mother, friend, employer and citizen. Actually, I found her rather likeable, and it is impossible to take this novel seriously as a diatribe against reactionary attitudes. The writing is too good humoured to elicit any response other than good humour from the reader. Although all the characters are mocked, they condemn themselves with endearing guilelessness out of their own mouths. Precision without cruelty is rare in humour, but James Wilcox achieves it consistently and with seeming effortlessness.

Stephanie Dowrick's Bildungsroman, **Running Backwards Over Sand**, ranges from New Zealand, where her heroine Zoë Delighty was born, to London and Berlin. The learning process comes not from any formal sort of education but from close and somewhat desperate personal relationships. First, there is the adored mother who dies of cancer when Zoë is ten; then there is the glamorous lover Gabriel, artist and betrayer; and last the equally glamorous Claudine, who also becomes Zoë's lover. The relationships purport to show some form of progression, the unmothered Zoë eventually finding true love with another woman. This is too neat. Zoë's problem is less her sexual orientation (further confused by an overdose of Catholicism) than her voracious narcissism. Although Stephanie Dowrick's sentiments are often to be applauded, this misjudgment throws the novel quite off balance.

Catholicism is no baddie in **The Garish Day**: in a sense it could be said to be its hero(ine). Harry is secretly baptised a Catholic by his mother in 1940 in Sri Lanka where his non-Catholic father is working for the Foreign Office. Although he grows up an orthodox public schoolboy and follows in father's footsteps, Catholicism remains, as it were, in his unconscious, struggling to emerge into consciousness. Rachel Billington seems to equate Catholicism with 'feminine' qualities (so disastrously repressed in Harry) such as the ability to express emotion. She may well be right, and this is a brave, sober and thoughtful try. But sceptics such as myself will remain unconvinced.

Back in Ireland and staying with Catholicism, **Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter** moves several notches down the social scale. Anne O'Brien is 17, the daughter of a crazy American mother bringing up her children alone in the Dublin of the 1960s. But it is Anne who ends up (somewhat to her own relief) in a mental hospital and is given shock treatment. Mary Rose Callaghan's throwaway style is deceptive: this is a harrowing little tale, too similar in both plot and setting to Frances Molly's *No Mate For the Magpie* to avoid the question: is *this* what Mother Ireland is doing to her clever but impoverished daughters? □

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Shorter reviews

A Manifesto for Old Age
JOANNA BORNAT, CHRIS PHILLIPSON, SUE WARD *Pluto Press* £2.95

The Jenkins notion of a 'fundamental rethink' about retirement welfare starts and ends with money. *A Manifesto for Old Age* is a truly socialist reappraisal, starting and ending with people.

The first half is a detailed critique of the present situation showing, among other things, how people's retirement conditions are determined by social class, gender and ethnic origins.

The second half proposes a whole range of new approaches, including a pension scheme that would not depend on contributions record but would be available to all men and women living in this country, whether single or married, with pensioners involved in the administration and decision-making.

It should be high enough for the elderly to be able to be participants in the life around them and to marginalise, at the worse end of the scale, the requirements for a supplementary system and, at the slightly more comfortable end, the need for earnings-related or occupational schemes.

Pensions schemes are only one aspect of the *Manifesto*'s range. It covers health, housing, transport, heating and leisure, and puts everything in the context of a necessary transformation of society's perception of the aged, proposing an attack on ageist attitudes in schools, the media, literature and advertising.

The ideas are not presented as a blueprint but as a basis for discussion and campaigning. There's plenty of scope for argument within the various sections. More thought, for instance, is needed about opportunities for personal development. The authors' preoccupation with education for the elderly could turn out to be a middle-class concept; working-class people might attach more importance to the provision of means for fulfilling long-cherished creative and performance aspirations, participating in local and national entertainments and revitalising traditional skills.

The sweeping turn-around proposed could not be carried out without bringing in other major socialist measures. But it offers a future Labour government a long-term vision that could capture public imagination and a firm ground on which to begin to turn the wheels in the right direction.

Nina Hibbin

The Land of Ulro
CZESLAW MILOSZ trans. LOUIS IRIBANE *Carcanet* £12.95

Milosz wrote this spiritual autobiography, history of ideas and polemic in his study overlooking the Pacific at Grizzly Peak, California, where he arrived in 1961 via Lithuania, Poland, Russia and France. He won the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature and lectures at Berkeley but remains troubled by the notion of having pursued a literary career. Of what value, he asks, are disputes over poetics set against the magnitude of events this century? In the hands of as fine a poet as Milosz, of considerable value. *The Land of Ulro*, written in prose and for the first time available in English translation in the UK, has the rhythms of poetry and finds occasions to reflect on language, form and imagination. It also revels in gossipy reminiscences about fellow inhabitants of 'the estate of Polish literature'.

The question which dominates the book is how to escape from Ulro, Blake's symbol for hell on earth. Milosz variously identifies Ulro as the scientific world-view, secular humanism, the dogma of historical necessity, nihilism or regarding self as the sole means of perception. Blake, Dostoevsky, Swedenborg, Simone Weil are commended for rebelling against it; Beckett and other traders in 'striptease literature' are castigated for being at home there.

Milosz himself cannot escape his past. His proud dissociation from his Polish Catholic background 'has been crumbled by experience' and, like the narrator in *The Issa Valley*, he is at a loss whether to use the past or present tense. Does what has vanished really survive in the memory of the chronicler, in his account of it? For Milosz it does, and he quotes with approval a contemporary's description of him as like a Lithuanian squire 'swotting flies and brooding over the fact that 20 years ago his wife served him plum rather than cherry *pirogi*, and wanting to know what it meant'.

Alan Hurst

Narrow Rooms
JAMES PURDY *GMP* £9.95

At the centre of James Purdy's extraordinary *Narrow Rooms* is the passion which consumes one man, Sturtevant, for his former schoolmate, Sydney De Lakes. Lakes has always found Sturtevant's advances repulsive and the passion has become destructive. At the beginning of the book Lakes returns from prison where he has served a sentence for the manslaughter of Sturtevant's lover, whom Sturtevant had sent to seduce and eventually kill Lakes. Lakes takes up a job as nurse to a young man crippled in an accident and, having an affair with him, returns him to health. The novel explores the consequences on the four men of Sturtevant's obsession and follows this obsession through to its awful climax.

Narrow Rooms is a compelling and harrowing book. Purdy relentlessly creates a world in which passion is a force of nature. When Sydney claims that he has done nothing to egg on Sturtevant's passion, Sturtevant replies, 'Listen then to how you egged me on. Just by existing you did.' It is not Lakes's fault, but nor is it Sturtevant's. Judgment has no place here; we watch the tragedy unfolding as we might watch a hurricane descend upon a city.

Narrow Rooms is a quite brilliant achievement. GMP has occasionally spread its net a little too wide in its search for Modern Classics, but here it has a catch in which any publisher could take pride.

Stephen Everson

Planet: The Welsh Internationalist
Ed. NED THOMAS £1.50 (or £2 by post from PO Box 44, Aberystwyth, Dyfed)

Judging from the first issue of the revived *Planet*, a Welsh cultural magazine published in English, Wales is alive and kicking. Apathy, an Anglo-Saxon affliction, has not made serious inroads — yet.

The revival of the magazine, together with the planned annual volume in Welsh, could not have been better timed. The recent impact of the brilliant new generation of Welsh historians, the effects of the Welsh language television channel, the vigorous peace movement and the lessons of the miners' strike, all point to the urgent need for a new forum for ideas. In this issue Ned Thomas has provided such a facility. He has no truck with the cultural isolationists and intends *Planet* to reflect his belief that culture and economics are 'indivisible and interdependent' and that lessons can be drawn from the experiences of other countries.

The majority of the contributions are of a high standard. Thorough editing has ensured that there is none of the self-indulgent, pretentious meandering that often strays on to the pages of some publications. In my view four articles deserve a special mention — R. Gerallt Jones's excellent analysis of the drawbacks of presenting history on television, Ann Pettitt's account of her contacts with the unofficial and official Russian peace movements, Saunders Lewis's deeply moving interview with Kate Roberts, the Welsh short story writer, and John Osmond's 'The Future of the Wales Congress'. I hope that the format of a few poems, one short story per issue is maintained; there are other outlets for creative writing in Wales.

Provided that the high standard of the contributions can be maintained — and there is no reason to believe otherwise — it is to be hoped that the evidence of growing involvement in a wide range of issues, and the need for constructive criticism of the increasing output of film, drama and poetry will lead to its monthly rather than bi-monthly issue.

Diana Whitley Jones

New Books

Does Education Matter?
Brian Simon

A discussion of many of the most pressing problems in education. Essential reading for all those concerned with education — whether as teachers, students or parents. 'There is a threat out there, Brian Simon says, and those who believe in education as a means to bring about democratic change had better mobilise' — *Guardian*

£5.95 paperback

Swastika Night
Katharine Burdekin

This chilling anti-fascist fantasy was first published in 1937 under a male pen-name. In this unjustly neglected novel, Burdekin reveals the connection between gender and political power and anticipates modern feminist science fiction. 'Not to be missed' — *Marxism Today*

£3.95 paperback

LAWRENCE & WISHART
39 Museum St, London WC1A 1LQ

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Whole lotta shakin'

Olivia Harris

Truth, Dare or Promise
Ed. LIZ HERON *Virago* £4.95

MANY PEOPLE seem to share the sensation that their life is like a Russian novel — a series of disconnected people and events which through the passage of time take form as though they really were the product of some hidden creative imagination. This book has a similar pattern: 12 women of the most diverse ethnic, geographical and, to a lesser extent, class origins, all born between 1943 and 1951 in Britain, who all end up as feminists, as socialists, as writers, most of them living in north London. Each presents a personal account of growing up as a girl in the Fifties. Some of the writing is exuberant, some ironical, some hedged about with pain, but all is deeply expressive and unsentimental. The growing awareness as one essay succeeds another that all the writers are heading in the same direction, from the Grampians, from Blackpool, from Kent, from Roundhay (Leeds), gives the book something of the finality of a single narrative. It is compulsive reading.

The authors are concerned with tracing the trajectory of their lives but not in a deterministic sense. All presuppose an understanding of the particular social and historical circumstances into which they were born but, rather than labouring the point, they interrogate their sense of self and their various experiences of the way that a girl's identity was created in post-war Britain. Carolyn Steedman, herself a historian, is the most explicit in her juxtaposition of a personal history with the canons of social history for the period, and she weaves the two contrasted perspectives into an illuminating, uneasy coalition. On the other hand, Denise Riley, in a highly-charged essay, refuses any kind of explanation, almost any kind of sequence ('To claim "understanding" would be a kindly fiction. I understand nothing, and refuse to.')

All the authors to some extent put themselves on the line, confronting their sense of isolation, their attempts to knit together loyalty to their roots with their increasing desire to escape, the apparent triviality of early sexual experiences, the mothers who found their daughters a burden, the violent fathers, mental illness, the frightening consciousness of homosexuality . . .

But perhaps the hardest thing to write about is the ordinariness of childhood. This is the theme of Valerie Walkerdine's fine essay; and in a way the theme of the whole book, since all the authors avoid easy mythologising and convey well the lack of choice, the fact that whether they liked it or not this is where they belonged and came from, the world from which their exit figured as an escape. The partial exception is Stef Pixner's contribution. Unlike the others, her childhood was structured by Socialist Sunday Schools and CND. She is also alone in being able to quote extensively from vivid childhood diaries.

Their memories articulate and revive my own. 'Everything seemed to be brown in those days,' writes Gail Lewis. 'The shops, the insides of houses, the atmosphere.' There was a sense of discontinuity produced by the end of the war, the endless recounting of its excitement and heroism, the censorship of its horrors. The overwhelming mood of austerity and drabness, even in those families which objectively were not poor, is finely portrayed, as is the sense of hope, of a new beginning. Many things, it appears, were shared by all of us.

The book at one level, then, is a social history of childhood in the Fifties. But it is also much more because all the writers bring to the task of autobiography an open-ended but theoretically elaborate sense of what it is to be a girl. Most of the authors come from working-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds and none had an upbringing that could be described as privileged, but in one sense their accounts are anything but typical. For they are the stories of gifted children, the ones who passed the eleven plus and left most of their contemporaries behind at secondary moderns, or later filling supermarket shelves, and moved definitively, via university, out of their class origins.

They experienced their sense of difference in various ways: Ursula Huws announces when she is small that she will become a witch; Liz Heron decides to be a nun; Alison Hennegan is determined to be a Cambridge spinster; most opt for a double existence — to be clever and a girl. As many contributions acknowledge, it was the Welfare State and the 1944 Education Act that made it possible for them to translate this conundrum into something quite different from what their mothers could aspire to.

Perhaps they are also untypical in another less obvious way. While fathers — and grandfathers — are prominent in many of the essays, brothers are virtually absent. The mood conveyed by most writers is one of aloneness in a world of adults, and mainly a female world. Is this an accident of editorial selection, or does it perhaps tell us something of the social history of contemporary feminism? □

Encounter

Brendan Cleary

Why such an awesome look
when we meet
on the library steps?

I know as well
he's gone away.
Caught the sleeper
with his kit bag.

After the train disappeared
did you stare through the dust,
with your hand still raised
as if to wave?

In the crucible

Robert del Quiaro

The Last Frontier: Fighting over Land in the Amazon
SUE BRANFORD and ORIEL GLOCK *Zed* £19.95 & £7.95

FOR A GOOD 20 years the future of the vast Amazon region of Brazil has been at issue in a struggle that has erupted in gunfights across forest clearings, criminal conspiracies by public officials, purblind profit-seeking in boardrooms. It is a war in which many who will never go near the Amazon have an unwitting hand and from which stem consequences apt to blight the lives of everyone on the planet.

Now here comes a book that speaks for and about the voiceless in the front line — the landless peasants who have moved west and north from the more populous parts of Brazil and the indigenous peoples who have lived there for far longer than anyone.

Also moving in that direction are commercial companies setting up ranches and agricultural colonies, still riding the momentum given them by the 21-year military regime that stepped down in Brazil this year. The generals, taken with the notion of Brazilian entrepreneurs occupying the Amazon for profit and national security, extended tax rebates to companies that would branch out into Amazon ranching. This ill-supervised encouragement, dripping corruption, has wasted public funds, damaged great tracts as forest was cleared from land unsuited to pasture and provoked mayhem as hired gunslingers tried to oust settlers who felt that, having established subsistence plots on unused land, they had the right to stay.

The new civilian administration can seize the opportunity, missed by the military, to install small farmers in Amazonia without further upset to them, the tribes or the forest.

All this and more is dealt with in the book, which arises from intrepid, patient visits to listen to protagonists in the region and from sound analysis of the economic and social changes at work there and elsewhere.

Here is a backlands settler, bundled off to jail for interrogation, asking what's this stuff that

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makes him 'jump like a frog'. A torture machine has just given him his first experience of electricity. An old squatter tells how he has planted fruit trees at every place his family has been able to stop during its wandering across Brazil, but has always been evicted before he could pluck any fruit.

Dom Pedro Casaldáliga — Bishop of Sao Félix do Araguaia, a diocese twice the size of Portugal — defends the downtrodden with argument, poems and personal bravery. He and his kind in the Amazon church shine splendidly throughout the account. Meanwhile, companies acquire holdings of 2,000 square miles and more each.

Distraught as their communities are destroyed by disease and incursion, Indian women gather contraceptive herbs in the forest so that their people's despair may be ended the sooner, in genocide. Settler women stand up to swaggering gunmen, tend the crops and keep the home together while their men are hiding in the forest from bully squads or in jail hundreds of miles away.

The pressure from abroad on Brazil to expand large-scale agriculture, stock-raising and mining, so as to export more and earn more hard currency to service its foreign debt, is pointed out. Nice to know that your High Street bank can keep your charges down if its Third World debtors cough up regularly. There is no free banking.

Completed as recently as May, the book stands as contemporary history and war correspondence, of a high order in both respects. However, grateful as I am to see it and for the kind mention given me in the preface, I wish it had been better finished. Vocabulary and style are threadbare, one particular syntactical device being used *ad nauseam* and way beyond, and the notorious 'situation' bug has mutated here into a 'process' outbreak — 'occupation process', 'evolution process'... The text is sprinkled with proof-reading errors and the overall organisation might have been tighter. Most of this could have been sorted out by an editor with a lick of literacy, and no cavils reduce the book's indispensability.

Since what it describes is still happening, it constitutes a blueprint for Brazil and other countries so beset. The settlers are surging further into Amazonia and, the book says, at the present rate of destruction, the last tree in Rondônia state will fall just in time to be a Christmas decoration in 1988. Huge schemes to mine iron ore, bauxite and other metals, mainly for export, are causing more trouble.

The book makes sense on the ecology of the Amazon, reminding that, the forest being in climax, it is consuming about as much oxygen as it yields. Further destruction of it would be felt mainly in the release of carbon dioxide and the increase of pollution and temperatures around the globe in the greenhouse effect.

Come the day that the children ask, through sweaty smog masks, how it came about that so much of the globe is contested desert, that the air is always so hot yet the sun so obscured, you will say — 'through the triumph of greed' — and you will give them this book. □

Oriel Glock died during the preparation of the book; so was lost an honest worker who knew how to embrace surprise (RdQ)

FILMS

The incredible hulk

Francis Wheen

Me Rambo, you some implausible love interest

Rambo (First Blood Part II) (15)
Warner, Leicester Square; Classics, Haymarket & Oxford Street; ABCs, Fulham Road, Edgware Road & Bayswater
The Fruits of Passion
ICA; Electric Screen

> How comforting it is, once or twice a year,
> To get together and forget the old times.
> (James Fenton, *A German Requiem*)

ANNIVERSARIES are occasions for forgetting — or, to be blunt about it, for rewriting history. In the past year there have been some particularly sinister examples. The 40th anniversary of D-Day was organised in such a way as to omit all reference to the Soviet Union's contribution to the Allied victory. The 40th anniversary of Hiroshima has been used by Western governments to promote the myth of the atomic bomb as a benevolent peace-keeper.

As if all that weren't enough, this year has also been the tenth anniversary of the fall of Saigon. In the hit parade this was commemorated by a nasty little record called *19*, which managed to ignore completely the sufferings of Vietnam and its people; instead, it suggested that the real tragedy of the Vietnam war was that the average age of US combat troops was 19.

And now the mangling of history has been taken a stage further by Sylvester Stallone's film **Rambo**, a fantasy that has proved not only commercially successful but also politically potent. As Ronald Reagan said at the time of the Beirut hostage crisis earlier this year, 'After seeing *Rambo* last night, I know what to do next time this happens.' Last week the *Sun*, the Paper That Supports Our Boys, gave away 10,000 tickets to the film.

Something alarming and significant is clearly going on here, and it's easy enough to see what it is. As you must be aware by now, *Rambo* is intended to vindicate the belief of men like Stallone and Reagan that America could have 'won' the Vietnam war had it not been for the enemy within — the American media, East Coast liberals, bureaucrats and other namby-pambies. On another level it is a reaffirmation of the 'virtues' of manhood, a sock in the jaw for feminists, gays and anyone else who might dare to tamper with the sacred codes of masculinity.

John Rambo, like so many of Stallone's screen *personae*, is a jumbo dumbo, a man of few words but many muscles. At the beginning of the film, when his former commanding officer asks him to go into Vietnam to see if there are still any American POWs held there, Rambo

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Birdy Eloquent images, inspired technique, skin-tight performances give brave lift-off to allegory-flecked adventures in blue-collar Philly of ornithological obsessive (Matthew Modine) and butch buddy (Nicolas Cage), later traumatised by Vietnam. Alan Parker's most sympathetic venture since *Bugsy*.

The Purple Rose of Cairo Woody Allen's brilliantly faceted, sad-funny fantasy, as relevant to our depressed Eighties as its Depression Thirties. Actor in idiot flick descends from New Jersey screen briefly to woo movie-mad, downtrodden housewife, making chaos and whoopee. (Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels).

Witness Australian director Peter Weir in fine-tuned control of offbeat US thriller. Rugged but honest city policeman (Harrison Ford), grudgingly harboured from bent colleagues by time-warp Amish farmers, shares unconsummated love with Kelly McGillis's superb widow until the inevitable, estranging shoot-out.

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asks: 'Sir, do we get to win this time?' In the next one and a half hours, Stallone has no more than three or four dozen lines to speak, most of them little more than grunts and mumbles. In the closing frames, however, he does utter another completed sentence: 'I want for our country to love us as much as we love it; that's what I want.'

In between these two slices of cliché is sandwiched a feast of other clichés, visual and political. The Vietnamese soldiers are incompetent gooks who can't shoot straight. The Russian interrogator (played once again by Steve Berkoff, who's in danger of being typecast in this part) is a grinning sadist. The American 'bureaucrat' who supervises Rambo's mission is unpatriotic (in that he tries to prevent Rambo from rescuing the POWs).

The sight of Rambo single-handedly wiping out hundreds of Vietnamese troops without sustaining an injury himself would be so preposterous as to be laughable, if it weren't for the fact that most viewers are likely to take it seriously. In America, the film's audiences have been mainly white, male teenagers. The same seems likely to be the case over here, to judge by the hundreds of youths who queued for *Sun* tickets last week. The kids in America who cheered every time Rambo wasted a Commie are the same kids who will be packed off to invade Nicaragua. And will Stallone join them, leading his disciples in the assault on Managua?

I doubt it. As Christopher Hitchens pointed out in the *Spectator* recently, those who call most loudly for war tend to be men whose own war records don't bear much scrutiny. In Britain, we have a flak-jacketed Defence Minister who bought himself out of National Service. In America, the President is a man who spent World War II in the safety of Hollywood, despite his recent attempts to pretend that he saw action. Stallone conforms to type admirably. While others were being drafted to fight in Vietnam, he sat out the war teaching in Switzerland. Attaboy.

All of which leaves little space for **The Fruits of Passion**, made by a Japanese director (the late Shuji Terayama) and based on a French novel (*Return to the Château*, sequel to *The Story of O*) about the English vice. In fact, however, sado-masochism takes a back seat here; and the theme of sexual possession, which made the original *Story of O* such an unsettling fiction, is diluted by a secondary plot about revolution in China, where Sir Stephen has installed O in a brothel. Terayama half-suggests a parallel between O's captivity and the bondage of the Chinese 'coolies', but doesn't explore the connections in any great depth. He peppers the film with dream-images: some of them — notably O strapped to a bedstead perched on the gable of a house — are genuinely arresting, but others — a broken doll floating in a stream, for instance — seem slightly banal. Still, there's no denying that the cinematography (by Tatsuo Suzuki) is consistently remarkable, and Isabelle Illiers' performance as O is an unnervingly good study in silent yearning. □

Silently yearning Isabelle Illiers as O

EDINBURGH

Jazzed up

Angus Calder

HAILING A CAB in mid-Festival, I found myself in Bob's Fringe Taxi. Bob wears a Glengarry, has bedecked his cab with tartans and plays you Jimmy Shand on cassette. A ride with him must constitute the smallest and shortest Festival event.

But not the cheapest, of course. Elsewhere, you could go round all day, spend not a penny and have a very good time. Street theatre flourishes at the foot of the Mound, where I've watched a man putting pythons' heads into his mouth, and free art exhibitions abound. **Komar and Melamid** at the Fruitmarket Gallery are Soviet exiles who offer, downstairs, big clever parodies of Socialist Realism, upstairs, more private jokes, some sexually explicit. The National Gallery's **Tribute to Wilkie** tries to prove that Sir David (b. 1785) deserved the high opinion held of him by Turner and other contemporaries. I wasn't convinced, but still enjoyed it.

The Traverse is never free, or even cheap, but this year has offered ample value for money. **Aus de Fremde**, by Ernst Jandl, sounded like two grimly pretentious hours — a day and a bit in the life of an ageing writer, clearly Jandl himself — in which 'he' eats, boozes, sleeps and composes a play on stage. 'He' and his woman friend 'she' speak in the third person throughout. But the well judged pacing of Peter Lichtenfels' production makes the play both amusing and moving.

At the same venue, I saw two highly original historical-political plays. **White Rose**, by a young Glasgwegian of great promise, Peter Arnott, is about a Soviet woman fighter pilot over Stalingrad and manages to combine outspoken commitment against war with friendly charm. Kate Duchene, Ken Stott and Tilda Swinton are all outstanding. So is Eileen Nicholas in the title role of Chris Hannan's **Elizabeth Gordon Quinn**, about the women's rent strike of 1915 in Glasgow. He tries to handle too many issues in one and a half hours, but I'm really looking forward to seeing a longer play by him.

The Wallace was first staged at the Festival in 1960, a few years before nationalism became for a time a dominant factor in Scottish politics. It reappears now when the SNP lacks both support and a sense of direction. Yet Tom Fleming produces it in the Assembly Hall as if his audience will fully concur with its lumpen-nationalist sentiment. Sydney Goodsir Smith was a poet with a genuine lyric gift but, on this evidence, had no historical sense. Fleming and a fine cast give the insubstantial pageant life by their zest. Alec Heggie's Man O' The People Wallace moves perilously close at times to the Wee Glesca Comic, but at least this counteracts the highfalutinness of the text's rhetoric. I fancy that this play will not be revived again, but am glad to have been able to judge it — providing such chances is one function of a great international festival.

Offering second-rate West End theatre most emphatically isn't. In advance it looked like a bright idea to have John Wells adapt Feydeau's *Le Dindon* for the Official Festival, but **Women All Over** is direly disappointing. Wells's limp mid-Atlantic update has nothing Gallic about it to reinforce the Festival's Auld Alliance theme.

That you don't have to pander to the presumed Lowest Common Whatsit of Festival audiences in order to pack theatres was proved by the total sell-out of **Macbeth** in Japanese by the Toho Company, which redeemed the besmirched honour of Official drama. I knew I would never see a more beautiful production. The pace and commitment of the acting are breathtaking. The set includes a transparent screen which moves across the stage for many scenes. Combined with brilliant lighting techniques, it brings extraordinary, fresh power to scenes involving witches and ghosts.

Les Arts Florissants attempt similar virtuoso lighting in their presentation of two early French operas — Rameau's slight and indifferent *Anacréon* and Charpentier's touching *Actéon* — run together without interval. But the whole conception seems fussily over-elaborate. *Les Arts* should concentrate on straightforward projection of the music, for which they display ample talent.

Though hardly as much as the **Jazz Festival All Stars**, whom I now dub the Magnificent Eight. I got a foretaste of things to come when I heard **Illinois Jacquet**, still swinging hard, perform for Platform Jazz (Fringe). He had 'borrowed' the dream rhythm section which went on to give international distinction to the Jazz Festival proper: Ray Bryant, a hard driving piano capable of the most subtle improvisation, Gus Johnson who kept time as precisely as you'd expect from an ex-Basie man and who could produce that rare thing, a delicate drum solo, and the outrageous Milt Hinton on bass, 75 years old and past caring whether his witty interventions might upstage the horns.

Around and about during the week I caught the other five at various venues. Warren Vache's fine trumpet I'd heard here before, and Buddy Tate's monumental swing era tenor. The new revelations were Spanky Davis, a balloon-shaped and unheralded young trumpeter who sprayed heaven in the Roy Eldridge tradition, and Carl Fontana, out of the jazz scene for three decades after winning distinction with the Herman and Kenton

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bands, whose virtuosity on trombone had everyone gasping 'he plays it like a trumpet'.

Last but not least, Jim Galloway, Scottish Canadian soprano sax player of elfin charm, who, with his wife Rosemary, accepted the challenge of writing a suite for performance by the Magnificent Eight and the Scottish National Orchestra at the Usher Hall. The occasion, like others such, didn't quite come off. The SNO under Russell Gloyd teamed successfully with the excellent Black Eagles traditional band from Boston before the break to perform arrangements of 'standards' by Morton, Ellington, Joplin. But their role in 'Hot and Suite' was unclear. The fourth and, alas, briefest section was by far the most interesting musically, where the Galloways had scored for All Stars as well as SNO. The result sounded avant garde in both jazz and classical terms and the packed hall applauded warmly. The Eight had scaled Olympus again. □

HOUSING

Tory towers

Jules Lubbock

TWO YEARS AGO at a conference on Community Architecture I was buttonholed by Ken Atkins, former chairperson of Lewisham Self-Build Housing Association. These were his words: 'You're from the *New Statesman* — that's a Labour paper; you tell them "How can I vote Labour when they deny me the chance to own my own home. I voted Labour this time — but why should I have to live in the purgatory of a concrete jungle?"'

It was hard for me to explain that this paper is not the official organ of any political party. It was hard to point out that Lewisham, which promoted his housing association, was itself Labour. But it was even harder to convince him that it was not the Labour Party that had condemned people like him to purgatory. For although P.J. Dunleavy in *The Politics of Mass Housing* has shown that it was the Tory Housing Minister Duncan Sandys who in 1956 so altered the system of subsidy as to make it mandatory, in effect, for local authorities to build as high as they could, and that it was another Tory Minister, Keith Joseph, who in 1962/3 forced local authorities to adopt industrialised systems, the public's perception is that Labour was the culprit.

Why is this so? Primarily because it was inner-city, Labour-controlled authorities which had to implement Tory central government policy, though there are other reasons to which I shall return. But the question is what can Labour do about it before the next election at which the image of each party's housing policy may be critical. My feeling is that even though Labour's new housing policy, with its emphasis upon the right to a home, upon choice, upon the transformation of local authorities from giant landlords into enablers, upon tenant control and the right to form cooperatives, is an excellent one, it will not, by itself, change the public perception of the party's image. That can be done only if Mr Rooker, the Shadow Minister of Housing, harries the government unremittingly, presenting and re-presenting the bill, variously estimated at between £5 and £14 billion, to the guilty men, men like Keith Joseph, who refuse to allow even the £6 billion from the sale of council houses to be used to solve the problems they created.

Why hasn't Labour launched such an attack before? One reason is that many Labour politicians, including Rooker, actually believe that their party was to blame and fear that such an attack would boomerang. This is why the Tory misinterpretation of housing history must be corrected so as to exorcise Labour's guilt — guilt which the Tories have ruthlessly exploited to create their own contrasting image of the party of universal home ownership. By the simple expedient of the 1979 pledge to sell council houses they managed to present themselves as the party opposed to the concrete purgatory of municipal housing, purged themselves of any responsibility for it, and nailed Labour as the culprit without making any direct accusations that could be answered.

More seriously, and this is another reason for getting the historical record straight, Labour were forced into the position of defending the indefensible: municipal housing as the *only* tenure for all those who, like Ken Atkins, could not afford to buy, even though Labour had been pioneering cooperatives, mixed tenures, housing associations and even selling 90,000 council houses in the previous five years. More to the point, and another reason why I think such a campaign is necessary, is that even if Rooker's proposals for more flexibility and choice become the policy of a future Labour government, many Labour councillors will fail to implement them because they will still be caught in this double bind.

For the other side of such a campaign would be to reveal the core of the housing achievements of past Labour governments as something of which all socialists can be proud. That core lies in Aneurin Bevan's refusal, post-war, to play the numbers game, insisting instead upon high space standards and quality rather than quantity. It lies in Richard Crossman's dismantling of the high-rise subsidy and his support for rehabilitation rather than redevelopment of the Packington Estate in Islington, even though the wretched Baroness Sharp, his Permanent Secretary, countermanded his instructions while he was on holiday. It lies in Reg Freeson's record on cooperatives in the 1970s. And it lies too in those Labour authorities like Stirling, Glasgow and Lewisham which are now experimenting with tenant control.

This is a humane tradition that shows concern for the quality of life of individuals in their communities, one which has evolved as circumstances have changed and one which must continue to adapt. In contrast, the Tory record is one of instant technological solutions: Macmillan's ten per cent reduction in space standards in order to achieve his target of 300,000 houses a year, Duncan Sandys's high-rise and Joseph's sytems building, capped by Thatcher's refusal to do anything at all. These are the guilty people, responsible for the current tragically unnecessary housing crisis which is the consequence of the Tories' bungling mismanagement of the last one — the problem of the inner city slums. □

TELEVISION

Andrew Rissik
Total chaos

THE COMEDY of Spike Milligan is a continuing delight. Anarchic and subversive, his deranged personality is the most refreshing to be found on our television screens. During the last few weeks, in BBC2's repeated and re-edited **There's A Lot Of It About**, he has given us some satirical sketches of quite explosive lunacy. In one, a disarrayed vagrant sits down to munch through a French loaf, only to find, to his appalled surprise, that it starts to play the opening few bars of *Rhapsody In Blue*. In another, the *World Of Sport* starts with a photo-montage that includes cricket, tennis, soccer and what looked like the bombing of Dresden. Later, it featured an escalatingly bizarre pseudo-documentary in which a man invented a tennis racket without strings and, finding it useless, strapped live domestic cats to the frame and went on playing with those.

In a different week, Milligan did a dangerously accurate parody of David Attenborough trying to track down the bricks that built Stonehenge. We cut, as we usually do, from location to location, only to find Milligan orating pompously in a succession of glamorous hotels, jet-set swimming pools, expense-account, first-class accommodation, bewilderingly surrounded by naked and compliant women. Another week saw Milligan espousing the euthanasia organisation EXIT in a travesty *Panorama*. People should be allowed to die with dignity, it said, as we watched footage of motorcyclists unsuccessfully leaping convoys of buses, men being shot from cannons and others catapulting headfirst into rivers. The sketch ended with a mad aristocrat, played with manic solemnity by Milligan, chasing a chicken around the studio with a gigantic mallet. I must admit to having a weakness for this sort of thing and all of these had me helpless on the floor. In one instance, watching on tape, I had to freeze the frame to give me time to recover.

The customary critical line on Milligan is to admit that, yes, he can be quite funny, but that most of his stuff doesn't come off. To which I would answer that, for each over-protracted and laboured sketch, there are at least three murderously funny one-liners and, in every episode, a comic situation so fantastically mad that it remains embedded in one's imagination for days. *Monty Python's Flying Circus* — on which I was raised as an impressionable adolescent — was never as consistently funny as Milligan is. Milligan's humour has the blackness and desperation of real satire, a word whose dubious Oxbridge connotations have debased it considerably. *Beyond The Fringe, That Was The Week That Was, Monty Python* and *Not The Nine O'Clock News* all contained material of sharp, pertinent political and social lampoon, but none was truly satirical.

Satire proceeds from a coherent though dislocated view of the world and, as a form, it is unsparing and impartial. Frequently propelled

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by some sidelong notion of moral criticism, it is most emphatically not a merely clever way of saying clever, rather barbed things. Satire laughs at the idea that humour can be ideologically sound, that there are limits to what and whom you may attack, and its tone is not sneering and vindictive but rude, scabrous and subversive. Above all, it sets out to undermine the viewpoint from which we commonly look at life.

In Milligan's world farce ends not with a punch line, a gag, but in chaotic and unmitigated disaster. It is whimsy of the most lethal kind. In it conceited people are killed by random explosions, dogmatic opinion-makers become unalloyed lunatics and the humourless gravity of television's journalism becomes the hilarious casualty of crackpot lateral thinking. Sir Robert Mark turns into The Laughing Policeman; Harry Carpenter has a swivelling toupee with a life of its own; David Dimbleby delivers such a manic profusion of clichés that his persona self destructs. Because of Milligan I laughed without stopping throughout William Trevor's probably excellent play, **Broken Homes** (BBC2). His greatest achievement is to render the rest of the medium temporarily untenable.

Television's dominant comic form is the situation comedy, to be seen in operation this week in **Are You Being Served?** and **Ever Decre. ing Circles** (both BBC1). In fact, Milligan's humour better deserves the title, as he takes a situation, an idea, and deploys it to sly comic advantage. Real sitcom is cosy, well-mannered and ultimately very safe. The amusement it offers derives from the responses of predictable characters to fresh events, and it is actually soap opera with a funny face. The department-store world of *Are You Being Served?* has the comforting familiarity of Ambridge or Brookside and the difference here is, simply, that the characters aim principally to make you smile. Milligan's unruly genius is to invert this reassuring form. In his world, we are adrift without bearings or compass and anything may happen. His literary ancestors are Jonathan Swift — who proposed to solve the Irish famine by persuading the populace to eat its children — and the riddling, perverse Lewis Carroll. His immediate peers include Bunuel and Jaques Tati.

I can see all too well why certain members of the intelligentsia so admire Jean Luc Godard's frightfully, frightfully intelligent films. The bane of much 20th-century art has been the concept of 'irony' — a somewhat ambiguous term implying distance or detachment sardonically achieved — and **Slow Motion**, screened by Channel Four on Friday night, was riddled with it. The subject of Russian art — from Tolstoy to Tarkovsky — is the working of the human soul. The subject of French art — from Balzac and Colette to Truffaut and Godard — is the female posterior. Ironic, eh? □

Work in Progress is on holiday

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Nick Duffy

Friday night is poker night

David Berry

'It's the biggest game in town' (A. Alvarez)*

KEVIN IS THE FIRST to arrive. Bounding up our staircase, he blows in like an ill wind and with a mixture of public school politeness and machismo. 'Where's the action, then?' he g... 'It's gone ten already.' And he slouches dow... on the sofa, opens a can of Heineken and smiles.

Steve comes next, as quiet as a hippie at a cocktail party, and goes straight for his desired drug, Coca Cola. Then Miles, the New Zealander, clutching a bottle of the best French wine. And finally Padraig, who enquires with that peculiarly Irish simultaneous aggression and diffidence if we have any Blackbush whiskey left. I reach for the cupboard.

But this is not a drinks night with the lads. This is more serious and more amusing. This is poker.

For the last nine months, we've been meeting alternate Friday nights to play a few hands. Kevin is the expert and tells us stories of the hundreds of pounds he's lost in various poker schools that have been graced by a poker professional taking a little time off from earning his livelihood. (I'm never sure whether I believe these stories but Kevin is never sure he believes mine.)

Steve runs him close. He's played poker for years in his native Toronto and New York and now here in Camden. Miles and Padraig and myself are beginners — and converts.

Poker is not a card game but a game of personalities played with cards. It's been described, by Walter Matthau, as the game that exemplifies 'the worst aspects of capitalism that made the US great'. It's all this and more.

In the USA where the game originated, it's been estimated that 56 million people, most of them men, play regularly. No British government department has ever collected figures for the number of people playing here: in the 119 casinos where it's allowed; in the pubs and clubs where, generally, it isn't; or privately with friends who sometimes stop being friends during the game. We have all managed to remain friends though it's been a close thing.

THERE ARE many variations: Draw, where each player bets on his own hand and bets and discards in turn, two rounds for replacements and bets again, the highest hand whose endless variations I prefer playing. The traditional male ritual is very strong in this game (it's very strong.)

Steve shuffles the cards and for the first few hands, just to get lubricated, we play basic seven-card stud: three cards dealt out to each player, two down, one up. And then another card up and another and another and the final one down. Every card has its price depending

The Biggest Game in Town *by A. Alvarez: Deutsch, £8.95*

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on the probability of other players having better or worse cards and the psychology of how each player plays. The best five-card combination after all the betting has finished wins. But only of those with the nerve to stay in.

One night I had the best possible three first cards: two aces down 'in the hole' and one up. Here was my chance to win back the £15 I'd lost in the last hour (as poker aficionados will notice, we play for small stakes, which is one reason why we have remained friendly). My next four cards produced nothing but I was betting at each stage as if I had a good two-pair, usually a winning hand in basic stud with five people. Only Kevin remained in at the 'kill', raising each of my bets with customary nonchalance. At the last bet, I panicked, convinced that he had a flush, and threw in my hand allowing Kevin to scoop the 'pool' with what turned out to be a pair of fours. I tried hard to be a 'sport' but couldn't quite manage to remove a sick expression from my face. That's poker.

It's been said by feminists that men find it difficult to be with each other and sit and talk and share feelings in the way women do. Men have to be doing things, playing sport, competing, playing poker.

Much of our enjoyment of playing poker on Friday nights is that it gives us a structure to enjoy being together. We play a 'loose' game: after each hand we chat and discuss and the players who have gone out in early rounds of betting look at the hands of those who are still in and advise. Sometimes.

For a while, we used to invite close women friends to play but the invitations soon stopped. We wanted some space to be together just with other men.

And in between hands we gossip, more often than not about psychiatry and psychotherapy. Steve, Miles and Padraig are all psychiatrists. Psychiatrists are known to have a penchant for poker. Kevin is a psychotherapist and a car-dealer, his latest ruse. Not that different.

Once when we were playing 'Low Chicago', a version of stud where the 'pot' is split between the highest hand and the person with the lowest spade face down, Steve started speculating about whether Anna Freud was lesbian and what this means for the Oedipus Complex as she was analysed by her father. Play stopped for a while and the consensus that emerged was that she probably wasn't and that it didn't matter for the Freudian canon anyway. We all enjoy a good psychoanalytic gossip.

The next game was 'Deuces and one-eyed Jacks wild' — a game which greatly increases the chance of having the best hands, four of a kind and a straight flush. And I enquired about whether X, a member of the Royal Family, had been treated for post-natal depression at one of the large London teaching hospitals. I'd heard it somewhere. The consensus was that she had been. We all enjoy a little psychiatric gossip.

As feminists might predict, we rarely talk about our feelings or intimate topics like sex. Kevin's poker hero, the legendary Texan Slim Amarillo, is reported to have said 'Sex is good but poker lasts longer' but the experience of being together is enough. All men in our thirties, we have known the loss of not having close male friends and yet don't want to give up the traditional ways men are with each other. Just subvert them a bit. Playing a little poker as a satisfying excuse for spending time.

None of us would ever be able to play at a more serious level. We lack the aggression and single-mindedness needed to play the odds, to minimise losses when the cards aren't running and to maximise when they are. We lack the deviousness deliberately to lose a few hands when the pot is only worth a couple of pounds and then move in on someone on a winning streak and to play with false bravado when there's a little more at stake. Or we do most times.

Recently, Kevin has been trying to persuade us to play Hold-Em, the game of stud now favoured at the World Championships played each year in Las Vegas which Alvarez has captured brilliantly in his book. In Hold-Em, the final five cards are held in common, face up in the middle. According to Kevin, 'it separates the men from the boys'.

Kevin tries hard to be macho, never quite able to hide the fact that he's the gentlest of men. Padraig and Miles tease him. Steve says that he's always wanted to find a real man. I laugh with affection. A good man is hard to find. Our Friday night poker is about finding and liking ourselves as men. □

Weekend competition

No 2888 **Set by Jim Richardson**

The opening sentence of the *Guardian*'s second editorial of 10 August read as follows: 'It is diverting, this week, to compare the Queen Mother and President Ronald Reagan.' Would readers like to compose some other editorial openings (from any national newspaper) as skilfully designed to induce the reader to skip whatever might follow? Max. five attempts per entrant. Deadline: 11 September.

No 2885 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Adult literary masterpieces adapted for the very young reader.

Report **By Ernest Oswald fflap**

O! you wonderful, wonderful people. In form such as this, you can make an old gent forget the disappointments of the summer. Twelve pounds a head — and over to you.

Shakespeare's *King Lear*

How sad the King is! He wanted to keep his soldiers. Oh, look, the funny jester is telling him a joke. That will cheer him up. The King does not laugh at the joke. Maybe he has heard it before. Oh, look, here comes funny Edgar. He has no clothes on. Doesn't he look silly? It is raining. How wet they are getting. Look, Edgar shows the King his funny little house. Now they are warm and comfy.

Here comes the nice old duke. He has come to help the King. How kind of the old Duke. Look, the nice old Duke is going into the castle. The Princess is very cross with the old Duke. She did not want him to help her Dad. The Princess is going to play a naughty trick on the old Duke. She sticks a hot poker in his eye. How cross the old Duke is. The Princess does not mind. She sticks the poker in his other eye.

DAWN CORUS

Nabokov's *Lolita*

Here is a girl. See the girl. She is playing. Do you play games like these?

Here is a lady. She is the girl's mother. Here is a man. The lady likes the man. The man likes the girl. 'What is the girl's name?' he asks. 'Lolita,' says the lady.

Here is a car. It is big and shiny. It is the man's car. Here is Lolita. Lolita and the man are friends. Lolita and the man drive and drive. They go to a motel. Do you know what a motel is?

Here are Lolita and the man. See them play. Do you play games like these? If someone asks you to play a game you do not think is nice, you should tell a social worker.

RACHEL WARD

Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

Connie has fun with Oliver.
Oliver has fun with Connie.
Up, up, Oliver! See it go up!
Come, Oliver, come.
Come, Connie, come.
Can Oliver come?
Can Connie come?
Yes, yes, says Connie. I can come.
No, no, says Clifford.
Go away, Clifford, says Connie. We do not want you. You cannot come.
Go away, Clifford, says Oliver. You cannot have fun.

KAREN LEWTON

Mark's *Gospel*

Poor old Mr Pilate cannot make up his mind.
He says to his odd friends, 'You choose.'
'We choose Jesus,' they say.
Soon Jesus is unhappy.
Jesus says, 'Ouch, that hurts.'
'Ha ha ha,' laugh the soldiers.
'Oh no,' thinks Jesus, 'I can't see daddy.'
Then they put Jesus in a cave.
Mummy comes to look for him.
'Oh no,' says mummy, 'he's gone.
We must have just missed him.'

MICHAEL ROSEN

Leavis's *The Great Tradition*

Lots and lots of books have been written. Some are better than others. It is bad to read books that are not as good as others. What is more, there are really only a few books that are very good. Queenie and I know (because we do) what these books are and we tell everyone that they should read these books. If you see anyone reading a book by Evelyn Waugh you should hit them over the head with a punt pole. Cambridge is the centre of the world. Books written by foreigners are not as good as books written by English people.

NICHOLAS MURRAY

Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

The bad man is dead. Tess has killed the bad man. Well done, Tess!

Why is Tess sad?

See the pri-son. See the cell. The cell is dark. Tess is in the dark cell.

An-gel is not in the dark cell. An-gel is up on the hill. An-gel can-not play with Tess.

An-gel is sad. Tess is sad. They are sad.

Hear the bell strike. An-gel can hear the bell. An-gel can count the strokes of the bell.

One — two — three — four — five — six — seven — eight. It is eight o'clock!

See the men. See them take Tess out of the dark cell. Will they let her go play with An-gel?

No.

See the flag-post. See the flag. The flag is black. An-gel can see the black flag. Poor An-gel!

Poor Tess!

NOEL PETTY

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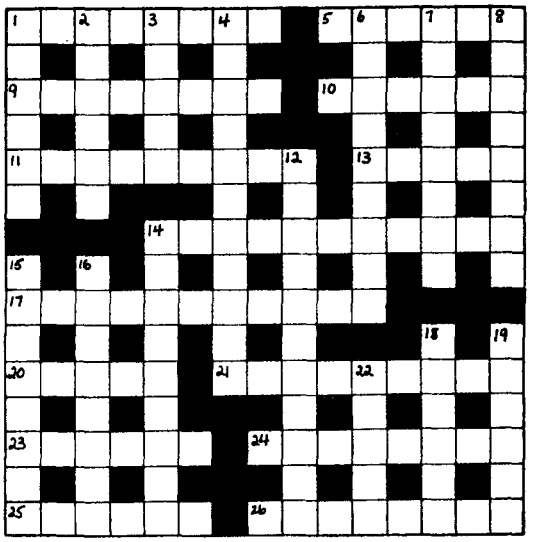
Weekend Crossword 1491

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1491, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 17 September.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

ACROSS

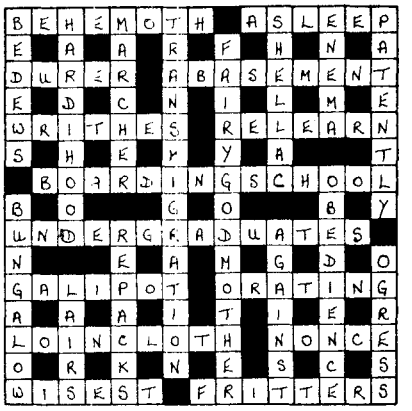
1. This officer is to provide gratuities for employees (8)
5. Strangely, for example, and strangely braved (6)
9. Foreigner sees madness in sporting activity (8)
10. Frees relatives after they have been decapitated (6)
11. Can use hot mixture for shrub (9)
13. Occurrence which took place in the seventies (5)
14. Prohibit television rentals in the county (11)
17. Put me in the gap as a substitute (11)
20. Vessel used for punishment (5)
21. Gloomy weekend if the muses were to leave for the day (9)
23. Feast when parents go on strike (6)
24. An ace goes badly into the suit (8)
25. Books without an article or makes a cancellation (6)
26. Dream I go crazy in character (8)

DOWN

1. Draw a line round hot part of Europe (6)
2. It is plain one parent is married to others (6)
3. Exercise which makes healthy look disappear (5)
4. Provides an easy time where flowers are following an act with woman (11)
6. The hotel in the desert possibly provides service (9)
7. A lot of illness which is half depicted in a poem (8)
8. George goes round the ring with another chap being made stupid (8)
12. Tory steeped in the unchanging (11)
14. Crime of sending dirty letters? (9)
15. Woman who is unusually glad about getting more money (8)
16. Provide weapons in a glen for a soldier (8)
18. For a criminal it is not so healthy under a king (6)
19. Advise them to recover (6)
22. Medium of publicity within a city (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1489



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LISTINGS

SAT 31 AUG

LONDON Ex-Services CND Annual March & Rally to mark outbreak of WW2. All ex-services people welcome. 12am leave Gordon statue, Embankment, SW1. 2-5pm Rally Westminster Cathedral Hall with 3 ESCND spkrs. **Details: Bob Laurence 01-883 6654.**

SUN 1 SEPT

LONDON Jewish Socialists' Grp talk by Julia Bush: 'East End Jews & Labour'. 7pm International Friends Centre, Torrington Pl, WC1.

MON 2 SEPT

LONDON 'Isolate Apartheid — Sanctions now!' Picket of Downing St 1-2pm. Petition to be handed in calling for immediate sanctions against S. Africa. **Org. City of London Anti-Apartheid Grp., 01-837 6050.**

TUES 3 SEPT

BLACKPOOL Labour Herald TUC Fringe Rally 5.30pm Baronial Hall, Winter Gardens. Spkrs. Arthur Scargill, Ann Lilburn, Sylvia Burton (Addenbrookes Strike Cttee.), Ted Knight, Matthew Warburton, John McDonnell. Tickets: £1/50p UB40.

SAT 7 SEPT

BRIXTON First meeting of Lambeth non-violent direct action grp. 2-5pm Brixton Recreation Centre. Disabled access. **Details: Paul 01-677 2183.**

LIVERPOOL Demo. against Unemployment & Social Security Cuts. Assemble Sefton Park, 10am march to rally in St. George's Plateau. Rock for Jobs with Barrington Levy, Alexei Sayle, the Redskins in Sefton Park 4pm onwards. **Org. Merseyside Unemployed Centres, NWTUC, Merseyside CC, Liverpool City Council.**

FORTHCOMING

10 SEPT LONDON ANC Cultural Ensemble AMANDLA will perform at Riverside Studios, Crisp Rd, Hammersmith, W6 until 22 Sept at 8pm. Tickets: £6/£4 UB40 from **Box Office: 01-748 3354.**

11 SEPT LONDON Chile: 12 Years after the coup. Public Meeting 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Adm. Free. Spkrs. incl Tony Benn, MP, Tony Banks, MP, Dan Murphy, priest recently returned from Chile. Chilean music, video. **Org. Chile Cttee. of Human Rights, 13-16 Borough Rd, SE1. 01-928 2099.**

14 SEPT LONDON Chile: Nat. Demo. Assemble 2pm Temple La. (off Strand) March to Jubilee Gdns. Rally with Tony Banks MP, Jack Collins (NUM), Tom Sawyer (NUPE), Betty Heathfield (Women against Pit Closures). Music from Chilean & Latin American grps. **Details: Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7. 01-272 4298.**

14-15 SEPT MANCHESTER 'Many Visions — many hands' Women's Peace Alliance Weekend for Peace, Justice & Disarmament at Manchester Town Hall. Registration (£5/£2 UB40) from 9am. Workshops, info sharing, social, creche, facilities for disabled. Convened by women from CND, Greenham women, Women's Peace Alliance. **Details: C/O Manchester CND, 61 Bloom St, Manchester M1 3LY.**

16 SEPT LONDON 'Time off for Women' — 10th anniversary of Iceland women's general strike on 24 Oct. Planning Meeting 7pm Tolmers Sq. Community Centre, NW1. Wheelchair access/creche — phone 01-837 7509 in advance. **Details: Wages For Housework Campaign 01-837 7509/459 1150.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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New Socialist

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Judith Williamson on John Berger's flawed Sexpol

Ann Pettifor on Labour's Macho Tendency

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ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-628 8795/638 8891 24hr info 628 2295
BARBICAN THEATRE
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RED NOSES by Peter Barnes "Superb new comedy" Gdn, — final perfs 31 August-3 Sep
THE PIT
THE WAR PLAYS by Edward Bond 4-5 Sep

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629
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Marxism Today

September Issue

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